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MEXICO

AND THE LIFE OF THE CONQUEROR

FERNANDO CORTES

BY

WILLIAM H. PRESCOTT

IN TWO VOLUMES

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CONQUEST OF MEXICO.

CHAPTER VII.

CORTÉS DESCENDS FROM THE TABLE-LAND.—NEGOTIATES WITH NARVAEZ.—PREPARES TO ASSAULT HIM.—QUARTERS OF NARVAEZ.—ATTACKED BY NIGHT.—NARVAEZ DEFEATED.

1520.

TRAVERSING the southern causeway, by which they had entered the capital, the little party were soon on their march across the beautiful Valley. They climbed the mountain screen which Nature had so ineffectually drawn around it; passed between the huge volcanoes that, like faithless watch-dogs on their posts, have long since been buried in slumber; threaded the intricate defiles where they had before experienced such bleak and tempestuous weather; and, emerging on the other side, descended the western slope which opens on the wide expanse of the fruitful plateau of Cholula.

They heeded little of what they saw on their rapid march, nor whether it was cold or hot. The anxiety of their minds made them indifferent to outward annoyances; and they had fortunately none to encounter from the natives, for the name of Spaniard was in itself a charm,—a better guard than helm or buckler to the bearer.

In Cholula, Cortés had the inexpressible satisfaction of meeting Velasquez de Leon, with the hundred and twenty soldiers intrusted to his command for the formation of a colony. That faithful officer had been some time at Cholula, waiting for the general's approach. Had he failed, the enterprise of Cortés

must have failed, also.[1] The idea of resistance, with his own handful of followers, would have been chimerical. As it was, his little band was now trebled, and acquired a confidence in proportion.

Cordially embracing their companions in arms, now knit together more closely than ever by the sense of a great and common danger, the combined troops traversed with quick step the streets of the sacred city, where many a dark pile of ruins told of their disastrous visit on the preceding autumn. They kept the high road to Tlascala; and, at not many leagues' distance from that capital, fell in with father Olmedo and his companions on their return from the camp of Narvaez, to which, it will be remembered, they had been sent as envoys. The ecclesiastic bore a letter from that commander, in which he summoned Cortés and his followers to submit to his authority as captain-general of the country, menacing them with condign punishment, in case of refusal or delay. Olmedo gave many curious particulars of the state of the enemy's camp. Narvaez he described as puffed up by authority, and negligent of precautions against a foe whom he held in contempt. He was surrounded by a number of pompous, conceited officers, who ministered to his vanity, and whose braggart tones, the good father, who had an eye for the ridiculous, imitated, to the no small diversion of Cortés and the soldiers. Many of the troops, he said, showed no great partiality for their commander, and were strongly disinclined to a rupture with their countrymen; a state of feeling much promoted by the accounts they had received of Cortés, by his own arguments and promises, and by the liberal distribution of the gold with which he had been provided. In addition to these matters, Cortés gathered much important intelligence respecting the position of the enemy's force, and his general plan of operations.

At Tlascala, the Spaniards were received with a frank and friendly hospitality. It is not said, whether any of the Tlascalan allies had accompanied them from Mexico. If they did, they went no further than their native city. Cortés requested a reinforcement of six hundred fresh troops to attend him on his present expedition. It was readily granted; but, before the army had proceeded many miles on its route, the Indian auxiliaries fell off, one after another, and returned to their city. They

[1] So says Oviedo—and with truth; "Si aquel capitan Juan Velasquez de Leon no estubiera mal con su pariente Diego Velasquez, é se pasara con los 150 Hombres, que havia llevado â Guaçacalco, á la parte de Pánfilo de Narvaez su cuñado, acabado oviera Cortés su oficio." Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 12.

had no personal feeling of animosity to gratify in the present instance, as in a war against Mexico. It may be, too, that, although intrepid in a contest with the bravest of the Indian races, they had had too fatal experience of the prowess of the white men, to care to measure swords with them again. At any rate, they deserted in such numbers, that Cortés dismissed the remainder at once, saying, good-humoredly, "He had rather part with them then, than in the hour of trial."

The troops soon entered on that wild district in the neighborhood of Perote, strewed with the wreck of volcanic matter, which forms so singular a contrast to the general character of beauty with which the scenery is stamped. It was not long before their eyes were gladdened by the approach of Sandoval and about sixty soldiers from the garrison of Vera Cruz, including several deserters from the enemy. It was a most important reinforcement, not more on account of the numbers of the men than of the character of the commander, in every respect one of the ablest captains in the service. He had been compelled to fetch a circuit, in order to avoid falling in with the enemy, and had forced his way through thick forests and wild mountain-passes, till he had fortunately, without accident, reached the appointed place of rendezvous, and stationed himself once more under the banner of his chieftain.[2]

At the same place, also, Cortés was met by Tobillos, a Spaniard whom he had sent to procure the lances from Chinantla. They were perfectly well made, after the pattern which had been given; double-headed spears, tipped with copper, and of great length. Tobillos drilled the men in the exercise of this weapon, the formidable uses of which, especially against horse, had been fully demonstrated, towards the close of the last century, by the Swiss battalions, in their encounters with the Burgundian chivalry, the best in Europe.[3]

Cortés now took a review of his army,—if so paltry a force may be called an army,—and found their numbers were two hundred and sixty-six, only five of whom were mounted. A few muskets and crossbows were sprinkled among them. In defensive armor they were sadly deficient. They were for the most part cased in the quilted doublet of the country, thickly stuffed

[2] Rel. Seg. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, pp. 123, 124.—Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 115–117.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 12.

[3] But, although irresistible against cavalry, the long pike of the German proved no match for the short sword and buckler of the Spaniard, in the great battle of Ravenna, fought a few years before this, 1512. Machiavelli makes some excellent reflections on the comparative merit of these arms. Arte della Guerra, lib. 2, ap. Opere, tom. IV. p. 67.

with cotton, the *escaupil*, recommended by its superior lightness, but which, though competent to turn the arrow of the Indian, was ineffectual against a musket-ball. Most of this cotton mail was exceedingly out of repair, giving evidence, in its unsightly gaps, of much rude service, and hard blows. Few, in this emergency, but would have given almost any price — the best of the gold chains which they wore in tawdry display over their poor habiliments—for a steel morion or cuirass, to take the place of their own hacked and battered armor.[4]

Under this coarse covering, however, they bore hearts stout and courageous as ever beat in human bosoms. For they were the heroes, still invincible, of many a hard-fought field, where the odds had been incalculably against them. They had large experience of the country and of the natives; knew well the character of their own commander, under whose eye they had been trained, till every movement was in obedience to him. The whole body seemed to constitute but a single individual, in respect of unity of design and of action. Thus its real effective force was incredibly augmented; and, what was no less important, the humblest soldier felt it to be so.

The troops now resumed their march across the table-land, until, reaching the eastern slope, their labors were lightened, as they descended towards the broad plains of the *tierra caliente*, spread out like a boundless ocean of verdure below them. At some fifteen leagues' distance from Cempoalla, where Narvaez, as has been noticed, had established his quarters, they were met by another embassy from that commander. It consisted of the priest, Guevara, Andres de Duero, and two or three others. Duero, the fast friend of Cortés, had been the person most instrumental, originally, in obtaining him his commission from Velasquez. They now greeted each other with a warm embrace, and it was not till after much preliminary conversation on private matters, that the secretary disclosed the object of his visit.

He bore a letter from Narvaez, couched in terms somewhat different from the preceding. That officer required, indeed, the acknowledgment of his paramount authority in the land, but offered his vessels to transport all, who desired it, from the country, together with their treasures and effects, without molestation or inquiry. The more liberal tenor of these terms was, doubtless, to be ascribed to the influence of Duero. The secretary strongly urged Cortés to comply with them, as the most

[4] Bernal Diaz, Hist. da la Conquista, cap. 118.

"Tambien quiero dezir la gran necessidad que teniamos de armas, que por vn peto, ó capacete, ó casco, ó babera de hierro, dieramos aquella noche quãto nos pidiera por ello, y todo quãto auiamos ganado." Cap. 122.

favorable that could be obtained, and as the only alternative affording him a chance of safety in his desperate condition. "For however valiant your men may be, how can they expect," he asked, "to face a force so much superior in numbers and equipment as that of their antagonist?" But Cortés had set his fortunes on the cast, and he was not the man to shrink from it. "If Narvaez bears a royal commission," he returned, "I will readily submit to him. But he has produced none. He is a deputy of my rival, Velasquez. For myself, I am a servant of the king; I have conquered the country for him; and for him, I and my brave followers will defend it, be assured, to the last drop of our blood. If we fall, it will be glory enough to have perished in the discharge of our duty."[5]

His friend might have been somewhat puzzled to comprehend how the authority of Cortés rested on a different ground from that of Narvaez; and if they both held of the same superior, the governor of Cuba, why that dignitary should not be empowered to supersede his own officer in case of dissatisfaction, and appoint a substitute.[6] But Cortés here reaped the full benefit of that legal fiction, if it may be so termed, by which his commission, resigned to the self-constituted municipality of Vera Cruz, was again derived through that body from the Crown. The device, indeed, was too palpable to impose on any but those who chose to be blinded. Most of the army were of this number. To them it seemed to give additional confidence, in the same manner as a strip of painted canvas, when substituted, as it has sometimes been, for a real parapet of stone, has been found not merely

[5] "Yo les respondí, que no via provision de Vuestra Alteza, por donde le debiesse entregar la Tierra; é que si alguna trahia, que la presentasse ante mí, y ante el Cabildo de la Vera Cruz, segun órden, y costumbre de España, y que yo estaba presto de la obedecer, y cumplir; y que hasta tanto, por ningun interese, ni partido haria lo que él decia; ántes yo, y los que conmigo estaban, moririamos en defensa de la Tierra, pues la habiamos ganado, y tenido por Vuestra Magestad pacífica, y segura, y por no ser Traydores y desleales á nuestro Rey. . . . . Considerando, que morir en servicio de mi Rey, y por defender, y amparar sus Tierras, y no las dejar usurpar, á mí, y á los de mi Compañía se nos seguia farta gloria." Rel. Seg. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, pp. 125–127.

[6] Such are the natural reflections of Oviedo, speculating on the matter some years later. "É tambien que me parece donaire, ó no bastante la escusa que Cortés da para fundar é justificar su negocio, que es decir, que el Narvaez presentase las provisiones que llevaba de S. M. Como si el dicho Cortés oviera ido á aquella tierra por mandado de S. M. ó con mas, ni tanta autoridad como llebaba Narvaez; pues que es claro é notorio, que el Adelantado Diego Velasquez, que embió á Cortés, era parte, segun derecho, para le embiar á remover, y el Cortés obligado á le obedecer. No quiero decir mas en esto por no ser odioso á ninguna de las partes." Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 12.

to impose on the enemy, but to give a sort of artificial courage to the defenders concealed behind it.[7]

Duero had arranged with his friend in Cuba, when he took command of the expedition, that he himself was to have a liberal share of the profits. It is said that Cortés confirmed this arrangement at the present juncture, and made it clearly for the other's interest that he should prevail in the struggle with Narvaez. This was an important point, considering the position of the secretary.[8] From this authentic source the general derived much information respecting the designs of Narvaez, which had escaped the knowledge of Olmedo. On the departure of the envoys, Cortés intrusted them with a letter for his rival, a counterpart of that which he had received from him. This show of negotiation intimated a desire on his part to postpone, if not avoid hostilities, which might the better put Narvaez off his guard. In the letter he summoned that commander and his followers to present themselves before him without delay, and to acknowledge his authority as the representative of his sovereign. He should otherwise be compelled to proceed against them as rebels to the Crown![9] With this missive, the vaunting tone of which was intended quite as much for his own troops as the enemy, Cortés dismissed the envoys. They returned to disseminate among their comrades their admiration of the general, and of his unbounded liberality, of which he took care they should experience full measure, and they dilated on the riches of his adherents, who, over their wretched attire, displayed, with ostentatious profusion, jewels, ornaments of gold, collars, and massive chains winding several times round their necks and bodies, the rich spoil of the treasury of Montezuma.

The army now took its way across the level plains of the *tierra caliente*, on which Nature has exhausted all the wonders of creation; it was covered more thickly then, than at the present day, with noble forests, where the towering cotton-wood tree, the growth of ages, stood side by side with the light bamboo, or banana, the product of a season, each in its way attesting the

[7] More than one example of this *ruse* is mentioned by Mariana in Spanish history, though the precise passages have escaped my memory.

[8] Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 119.

[9] "É assimismo mandaba, y mandé por el dicho Mandamiento á todas las Personas, que con el dicho Narvaez estaban, que no tubiessen, ni obedeciessen al dicho Narvaez por tal Capitan, ni Justicia; ántes, dentro de cierto término, que en el dicho Mandamiento señalé, pareciessen ante mí, para que yo les dijesse, lo que debian hacer en servicio de Vuestra Alteza: con protestacion, que lo contrario haciendo, procederia contra ellos, como contra Traydores, y aleves, y malos Vasallos, que se rebelaban contra su Rey, y quieren usurpar sus Tierras, y Señoríos." Rel. Seg. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 127.

marvellous fecundity of the soil, while innumerable creeping flowers, muffling up the giant branches of the trees, waved in bright festoons above their heads, loading the air with odors. But the senses of the Spaniards were not open to the delicious influences of nature. Their minds were occupied by one idea.

Coming upon an open reach of meadow, of some extent, they were, at length, stopped by a river, or rather stream, called *Rio de Canoas*, "the River of Canoes," of no great volume ordinarily, but swollen at this time by excessive rains. It had rained hard that day, although at intervals the sun had broken forth with intolerable fervor, affording a good specimen of those alternations of heat and moisture, which give such activity to vegetation in the tropics, where the process of forcing seems to be always going on.

The river was about a league distant from the camp of Narvaez. Before seeking out a practicable ford, by which to cross it, Cortés allowed his men to recruit their exhausted strength by stretching themselves on the ground. The shades of evening had gathered round; and the rising moon, wading through dark masses of cloud, shone with a doubtful and interrupted light. It was evident that the storm had not yet spent its fury.[10] Cortés did not regret this. He had made up his mind to an assault that very night, and in the darkness and uproar of the tempest his movements would be most effectually concealed.

Before disclosing his design, he addressed his men in one of those stirring, soldierly harangues, to which he had recourse in emergencies of great moment, as if to sound the depths of their hearts, and, where any faltered, to reanimate them with his own heroic spirit. He briefly recapitulated the great events of the campaign, the dangers they had surmounted, the victories they had achieved over the most appalling odds, the glorious spoil they had won. But of this they were now to be defrauded; not by men holding a legal warrant from the Crown, but by adventurers, with no better title than that of superior force. They had established a claim on the gratitude of their country and their sovereign. This claim was now to be dishonored, their very services were converted into crimes, and their names branded with infamy as those of traitors. But the time had at last come for vengeance. God would not desert the soldier of the Cross. Those, whom he had carried victorious through greater dangers, would not be left to fail now. And, if they should fail, better to die like brave men on the field of battle,

[10] "Y aun llouia de rato en rato, y entonces salia la Luna, que quãdo allí llegámos hazia muy escuro, y llouia, y tambien la escuridad ayudó." Hist de la Conquista, cap. 122.

than, with fame and fortune cast away, to perish ignominiously like slaves on the gibbet. — This last point he urged home upon his hearers; well knowing there was not one among them so dull as not to be touched by it.

They responded with hearty acclamations, and Velasquez de Leon, and de Lugo, in the name of the rest, assured their commander, if they failed, it should be his fault, not theirs. They would follow wherever he led. — The general was fully satisfied with the temper of his soldiers, as he felt that his difficulty lay not in awakening their enthusiasm, but in giving it a right direction. One thing is remarkable. He made no allusion to the defection which he knew existed in the enemy's camp. He would have his soldiers, in this last pinch, rely on nothing but themselves.

He announced his purpose to attack the enemy that very night, when he should be buried in slumber, and the friendly darkness might throw a veil over their own movements, and conceal the poverty of their numbers. To this the troops, jaded though they were by incessant marching, and half famished, joyfully assented. In their situation, suspense was the worst of evils. He next distributed the commands among his captains. To Gonzalo de Sandoval he assigned the important office of taking Narvaez. He was commanded, as *alguacil mayor*, to seize the person of that officer as a rebel to his sovereign, and, if he made resistance, to kill him on the spot.[11] He was provided with sixty picked men to aid him in this difficult task, supported by several of the ablest captains, among whom were two of the Alvarados, de Avila, and Ordaz. The largest division of the force was placed under Christóval de Olid, or, according to some authorities, of Pizarro, one of that family so renowned in the subsequent conquest of Peru. He was to get possession of the artillery, and to cover the assault of Sandoval by keeping those of the enemy at bay, who would interfere with it. Cortés reserved only a body of twenty men for himself, to act on any point that occasion might require. The watch-word was *Espíritu Santo*, it being the evening of Whitsunday. Having made these arrangements, he prepared to cross the river.[12]

[11] The Attorney of Narvaez, in his complaint before the Crown, expatiates on the diabolical enormity of these instructions. "El dho Fernando Corttés como traidor aleboso, sin apercibir al dho mi partte, con un diabólico pensamto é Infernal osadía, en contemtto é menosprecio de V. M. ó de sus provisiones R.s, no mirando ni asattando la lealtad qe debia á V. M., el dho Corttés diô un Mandamientto al dho Gonzalo de Sandobal para que prendiese al dho Pánfilo de Narvaez, é si se defendiese qe lo mattase." Demanda de Zavallos en nombre de Narvaez, MS.

[12] Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 12, 47.—Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 122.—Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 1.

During the interval thus occupied by Cortés, Narvaez had remained at Cempoalla, passing his days in idle and frivolous amusement. From this he was at length roused, after the return of Duero, by the remonstrances of the old cacique of the city. "Why are you so heedless?" exclaimed the latter; "do you think Malinche is so? Depend on it, he knows your situation exactly, and, when you least dream of it, he will be upon you."[13]

Alarmed at these suggestions and those of his friends, Narvaez at length put himself at the head of his troops, and, on the very day on which Cortés arrived at the River of Canoes, sallied out to meet him. But, when he had reached this barrier, Narvaez saw no sign of an enemy, The rain, which fell in torrents, soon drenched the soldiers to the skin. Made somewhat effeminate by their long and luxurious residence at Cempoalla, they murmured at their uncomfortable situation. "Of what use was it to remain there fighting with the elements? There was no sign of an enemy, and little reason to apprehend his approach in such tempestuous weather. It would be wiser to return to Cempoalla, and in the morning they should be all fresh for action, should Cortés make his appearance."

Narvaez took counsel of these advisers, or rather of his own inclinations. Before retracing his steps, he provided against surprise, by stationing a couple of sentinels at no great distance from the river, to give notice of the approach of Cortés. He also detached a body of forty horse in another direction, by which he thought it not improbable the enemy might advance on Cempoalla. Having taken these precautions, he fell back again before night on his own quarters.

He there occupied the principal *teocalli*. It consisted of a stone building on the usual pyramidal basis; and the ascent was by a flight of steep steps on one of the faces of the pyramid. In the edifice or sanctuary above he stationed himself with a strong party of arquebusiers and crossbow-men. Two other *teocallis* in the same area were garrisoned by large detachments of infantry. His artillery, consisting of seventeen or eighteen small guns, he posted in the area below, and protected it by the remainder of his cavalry. When he had thus distributed his forces, he returned to his own quarters, and soon after to repose, with as much indifference as if his rival had been on the other side of the Atlantic, instead of a neighboring stream.

[13] "Que hazeis, que estais mui descuidado? pensais que Malinche, y los Teules que trae cõsigo, que son assí como vosotros? Pues yo os digo, que quãdo no os cataredes, será aquí, y os matará." Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 121.

That stream was now converted by the deluge of waters into a furious torrent. It was with difficulty that a practicable ford could be found. The slippery stones, rolling beneath the feet, gave away at every step. The difficulty of the passage was much increased by the darkness and driving tempest. Still, with their long pikes, the Spaniards contrived to make good their footing, at least, all but two, who were swept down by the fury of the current. When they had reached the opposite side, they had new impediments to encounter, in traversing a road, never good, now made doubly difficult by the deep mire, and the tangled brushwood with which it was overrun.

Here they met with a cross, which had been raised by them on their former march into the interior. They hailed it as a good omen; and Cortés, kneeling before the blessed sign, confessed his sins, and declared his great object to be the triumph of the holy Catholic faith. The army followed his example, and, having made a general confession, received absolution from father Olmedo, who invoked the blessing of Heaven on the warriors who had consecrated their swords to the glory of the Cross. Then rising up and embracing one another, as companions in the good cause, they found themselves wonderfully invigorated and refreshed. The incident is curious, and well illustrates the character of the time,—in which war, religion, and rapine were so intimately blended together. Adjoining the road was a little coppice; and Cortés, and the few who had horses, dismounting, fastened the animals to the trees, where they might find some shelter from the storm. They deposited there, too, their baggage, and such superfluous articles as would encumber their movements. The general then gave them a few last words of advice. "Every thing," said he, "depends on obedience. Let no man, from desire of distinguishing himself, break his ranks. On silence, despatch, and, above all, obedience to your officers, the success of our enterprise depends."

Silently and stealthily they held on their way without beat of drum, or sound of trumpet, when they suddenly came on the two sentinels who had been stationed by Narvaez to give notice of their approach. This had been so noiseless, that the videttes were both of them surprised on their post, and one only, with difficulty, effected his escape. The other was brought before Cortés. Every effort was made to draw from him some account of the present position of Narvaez. But the man remained obstinately silent; and, though threatened with the gibbet, and having a noose actually drawn round his neck, his Spartan heroism was not to be vanquished. Fortunately no change had

taken place in the arrangements of Narvaez since the intelligence previously derived from Duero.

The other sentinel, who had escaped, carried the news of the enemy's approach to the camp. But his report was not credited by the lazy soldiers, whose slumbers he had disturbed. "He had been deceived by his fears," they said, "and mistaken the noise of the storm and the waving of the bushes, for the enemy. Cortés and his men were far enough on the other side of the river, which they would be slow to cross in such a night." Narvaez himself shared in the same blind infatuation, and the discredited sentinel slunk abashed to his own quarters, vainly menacing them with the consequences of their incredulity.[14]

Cortés, not doubting that the sentinel's report must alarm the enemy's camp, quickened his pace. As he drew near, he discerned a light in one of the lofty towers of the city. "It is the quarters of Narvaez," he exclaimed to Sandoval, "and that light must be your beacon." On entering the suburbs, the Spaniards were surprised to find no one stirring, and no symptom of alarm. Not a sound was to be heard, except the measured tread of their own footsteps half-drowned in the howling of the tempest. Still they could not move so stealthily as altogether to elude notice, as they defiled through the streets of this populous city. The tidings were quickly conveyed to the enemy's quarters, where, in an instant, all was bustle and confusion. The trumpets sounded to arms. The dragoons sprang to their steeds, the artillery-men to their guns. Narvaez hastily buckled on his armor, called his men around him, and summoned those in the neighboring *teocallis* to join him in the area. He gave his orders with coolness; for, however wanting in prudence, he was not deficient in presence of mind, or courage.

All this was the work of a few minutes. But in those minutes the Spaniards had reached the avenue leading to the camp. Cortés ordered his men to keep close to the walls of the buildings, that the cannon-shot might have a free range.[15] No sooner had they presented themselves before the inclosure, than the artillery of Narvaez opened a general fire. Fortunately the pieces were pointed so high that most of the balls passed over their heads, and three men only were struck down. They did not give the enemy time to reload. Cortés shouting the watch-word of the

[14] Rel. Seg. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 128.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 47.—Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 2, 3.

[15] "Ya que se acercaban al Aposento de Narvaez, Cortés, que andaba reconociendo, i ordenando á todas partes, dixo á la Tropa de Sandoval: Señores, arrímaos á las dos aceras de la Calle, para que las balas del Artillería pasen por medio, sin hacer daño." Ibid., dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 3.

night, "Espíritu Santo! Espíritu Santo! Upon them!" in a moment Olid and his division rushed on the artillery-men, whom they pierced, or knocked down with their pikes, and got possession of their guns. Another division engaged the cavalry, and made a diversion in favor of Sandoval, who with his gallant little band sprang up the great stairway of the temple. They were received with a shower of missiles,—arrows, and musket-balls which, in the hurried aim, and the darkness of the night, did little mischief. The next minute the assailants were on the platform, engaged hand to hand with their foes. Narvaez fought bravely in the midst, encouraging his followers. His standard-bearer fell by his side, run through the body. He himself received several wounds; for his short sword was no match for the long pikes of the assailants. At length, he received a blow from a spear, which struck out his left eye. "Santa María!" exclaimed the unhappy man, "I am slain!" The cry was instantly taken up by the followers of Cortés, who shouted, "Victory!"

Disabled and half mad with agony from his wound, Narvaez was withdrawn by his men into the sanctuary. The assailants endeavored to force an entrance but it was stoutly defended, At length a soldier, getting possession of a torch, or firebrand, flung it on the thatched roof, and in a few moments the combustible materials of which it was composed were in a blaze. Those within were driven out by the suffocating heat and smoke. A soldier named Farfan grappled with the wounded commander, and easily brought him to the ground; when he was speedily dragged down the steps and secured with fetters. His followers, seeing the fate of their chief, made no further resistance.[16]

During this time, Cortés and the troops of Olid had been engaged with the cavalry, and had discomfited them, after some ineffectual attempts on the part of the latter to break through the dense array of pikes, by which several of their number were unhorsed and some of them slain. The general then prepared to assault the other *teocallis*, first summoning the garrisons to surrender. As they refused, he brought up the heavy guns to bear on them, thus turning the artillery against its own masters. He accompanied this menacing movement with offers of the most liberal import; an amnesty of the past, and a full participation in all the advantages of the Conquest. One of the garrisons was under the command of Salvatierra, the same officer who talked of cutting off the ears of Cortés. . From the moment he had learned the fate of his own general, the hero was seized with a violent fit of illness which disabled him from further

[16] "Demanda de Zavallos en nombre de Narvaez, MS.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 47.

action. The garrison waited only for one discharge of the ordnance, when they accepted the terms of capitulation. Cortés, it is said, received, on this occasion, a support from an unexpected auxiliary. The air was filled with the *cocuyos*,—a species of large beetle which emits an intense phosphoric light from its body, strong enough to enable one to read by it. These wandering fires, seen in the darkness the night, were converted, by the excited imaginations of the besieged, into an army with match-locks! Such is the report of an eye-witness.[17] But the facility with which the enemy surrendered may quite as probably be referred to the cowardice of the commander, and the disaffection of the soldiers, not unwilling to come under the banners of Cortés.

The body of cavalry, posted, it will be remembered, by Narvaez on one of the roads to Ce poalla, to intercept his rival, having learned what had been passing were not long in tendering their submission. Each of the soldiers in the conquered army was required, in token of his obedience, to deposit his arms in the hands of the alguacils, and to take the oaths to Cortés as Chief Justice and Captain-General of e colony.

The number of the slain is variously reported. It seems probable that not more than twelv perished on the side of the vanquished, and of the victors half that number. The small amount may be explained by the short duration of the action, and the random aim of the missiles in the darkness. The number of the wounded was much more considerable.[18]

The field was now complet ly won. A few brief hours had sufficed to change the condition of Cortés from that of a wandering outlaw at the head of a handful of needy adventurers, a rebel with a price upo.. his head, to hat of an independent chief, with a force at his disposal stron. en ugh not only to secure his present conquests, but to open a career for still loftier ambition. While the air rung with the acclamations of the soldiery, the victorious general, assuming a deportment corresponding with

[17] "Como hazia tan escuro auia muchos cocayos (ansí los llaman en Cuba) que relumbrauan de noche, é los de Narvaez creyéron que erã muchas de las escopetas." Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap 122.

[18] Narvaez, or rather his attorney, swells the amount of slain on his own side much higher. But it was his cue to magnify the mischief sustained by his employer. The collation of this account with those of Cortés and his followers affords the best means of approximation to truth. "E allí le mattâron quince hombres qe muriéron de las feridas qe les diéron é les quemáron seis hombres del dho Incendio qe despues pareciéron las cabezas de ellos quemadas, é pusiéron á sacomano todo quantto ttenian los que benian con el dho mi partte como si fueran Moros y al dho mi partte robáron é saqueáron todos sus vienes, oro, é Platta é Joyas." Demanda de Zavallos en nombre de Narvaez, MS.

his change of fortune, took his seat in a chair of state, and, with a rich, embroidered mantle thrown over his shoulders, received, one by one, the officers and soldiers, as they came to tender their congratulations. The privates were graciously permitted to kiss his hand. The officers he noticed with words of compliment or courtesy; and, when Duero, Bermudez, the treasurer, and some others of the vanquished party, his old friends, presented themselves, he cordially embraced them.[19]

Narvaez, Salvatierra, and two or three of the hostile leaders were led before him in chains. It was a moment of deep humiliation for the former commander, in which the anguish of the body, however keen, must have been forgotten in that of the spirit. "You have great reason, Señor Cortés," said the discomfited warrior, "to thank Fortune for having given you the day so easily, and put me in your power." "I have much to be thankful for," replied the general; "but for my victory over you, I esteem it as one of the least of my achievements since my coming into the country!"[20] He then ordered the wounds of the prisoners to be cared for, and sent them under a strong guard to Vera Cruz.

Notwithstanding the proud humility of his reply, Cortés could scarcely have failed to regard his victory over Narvaez as one of the most brilliant achievements in his career. With a few scores of followers, badly clothed, worse fed, wasted by forced marches, under every personal disadvantage, deficient in weapons and military stores, he had attacked in their own quarters, routed, and captured the entire force of the enemy, thrice his superior in numbers, well provided with cavalry and artillery, admirably equipped, and complete in all the munitions of war! The amount of troops engaged on either side was, indeed, inconsiderable. But the proportions are not affected by this; and the relative strength of the parties made a result so decisive one of the most remarkable events in the annals of war.

[19] "Entre ellos venia Andres de Duero, y Agustin Bermudez, y muchos amigos de nuestro Capitã, y assí como veniã, ivan á besar las manos á Cortés, q̃ estaua sentado en vna silla de caderas, con vna ropa larga de color como naranjada, cõ sus armas debaxo, acõpañado de nosotros. Pues ver la gracia con que les hablaua, y abraçaua, y las palabras de tãtos cumplimiẽtos que les dezia, era cosa de ver que alegre estaua: y tenia mucha razon de verse en aquel pũto tan señor, y pujãte: y assí como le besaua la mano, se fuérõ cada vno á su posada." Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 122.

[20] Ibid., loc. cit.

"Díxose que como Narvaez vido á Cortés estando así preso le dixo: Señor Cortés, tened en mucho la ventura que habeis tenido, é lo mucho que habeis hecho en tener mi persona, ó en tomar mi persona. É que Cortés le respondió, é dixo: Lo menos que yo he hecho en esta tierra donde estais, es haberos prendido; é luego le hizo poner á buen recaudo é le tubo muche

It is true there were some contingencies on which the fortunes of the day depended, that could not be said to be entirely within his control. Something was the work of chance. If Velasquez de Leon, for exanple, had proved false, the expedition must have failed.[21] If the weather, on the night of the attack, had been fair, the enemy would have had certain notice of his approach, and been prepared for it. But these are the chances that enter more or less into every enterprise. He is the skilful general, who knows how to turn them to account; to win the smiles of Fortune, and make even the elements fight on his side.

If Velasquez de Leon was, as it proved, the very officer whom the general should have trusted with the command, it was his sagacity which originally discerned this, and selected him for it. It was his address that converted this dangerous foe into a friend; and one so fast that in the hours of need he chose rather to attach himself to his desperate fortunes than to those of the governor of Cuba, powerful as the latter was, and his near kinsman. It was the same address which gained Cortés such an ascendency over his soldiers, and knit them to him so closely, that, in the darkest moment, not a man offered to desert him.[22] If the success of the assault may be ascribed mainly to the dark and stormy weather which covered it, it was owing to him that he was in a condition to avail himself of this. The shortest possible time intervened between the conception of his plan and its execution. In a very few days, he descended by extraordinary marches from the capital to the sea-coast. He came like a tor-

tiempo preso." Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap 47.

[21] Oviedo says, that military men discussed whether Velasquez de Leon should have obeyed the commands of Cortés rather than those of his kinsman, the governor of Cuba. They decided in favor of the former, on the ground of his holding his commission immediately from him. "Visto hepliticar sobre esto á caballeros é personas militares sobre si este Juan Velasquez de Leon hizo lo que debia, en acudir ó no á Diego Velasquez, ó al Pánfilo en su nombre; E combienen los veteranos milites, é á mi parecer determinan bien la question, en que si Juan Velasquez tubo conducta de capitan para que con aquella Gente que él ... dió toveiese en aquella tierra como capitan particular le acudiese á él ó á quien le mandase. Juan Velasquez faltó á lo que era obligado en no pasar á Pánfilo de Narvaez siendo requerido de Diego Velasquez, mas si le hizo capitan Hernando Cortés, et le dió él la Gente, â él havia de acudir, como acudió, excepto si viera carta, á mandamiento expreso del Rey en contrario." Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 12.

[22] This ascendency the thoughtful Oviedo refers to his dazzling and liberal manners, so strongly contrasted with those of the governor of Cuba. "En lo demas valerosa persona ha seido, é para mucho; y este deseo de mandar juntamente con que fué mui bien partido é gratificador de los que le viniéron, fué mucha causa juntamente con ser mal quisto Diego Velasquez, para que Cortés se saliese con lo que emprendio, é se quedase en el oficio, é governacion." Ibid., MS., lib. 33, cap. 12.

rent from the mountains, pouring on the enemy's camp, and sweeping every thing away, before a barrier could be raised to arrest it. This celerity of movement, the result of a clear head and determined will, has entered into the strategy of the greatest captains, and forms a prominent feature in their most brilliant military exploits. It was undoubtedly in the present instance a great cause of success.

But it would be taking a limited view of the subject, to consider the battle which decided the fate of Narvaez, as wholly fought at Cempoalla. It was begun in Mexico. With that singular power which he exercised over all who came near him Cortés converted the very emissaries of Narvaez into his own friends and agents. The reports of Guevara and his companions, the intrigues of father Olmedo, and the general's gold, were all busily at work to shake the loyalty of the soldiers, and the battle was half won before a blow had been struck. It was fought quite as much with gold as with steel. Cortès understood this so well, that he made it his great object to seize the person of Narvaez. In such an event, he had full confidence that indifference to their own cause and partiality to himself would speedily bring the rest of the army under his banner. He was not deceived. Narvaez said truly enough, therefore, some years after this event, that "he had been beaten by his own troops, not by those of his rival; that his followers had been bribed to betray him."[23] This affords the only explanation of their brief and ineffectual resistance.

[23] It was in a conversation with Oviedo himself, at Toledo, in 1525, in which Narvaez descanted with much bitterness, as was natural, on his rival's conduct. The gossip, which has never appeared in print, may have some interest for the Spanish reader "Que el año de 1525, estando Cesar en la cibdad de Toledo, ví allí al dicho Narvaez, é publicamente decia, que Cortés era vn traidor: E que dándole S. M. licencia se lo haria conocer de su persona á la suya, é que era hombre sin verdad, é otras muchas é feas palabras llamándole alevoso é tirano, é ingrato á su Señor, é á quien le havia embiado á la Nueva España, que era el Adelantado Diego Velasquez á su propia costa, é se le havia alzado con la tierra, é con la Gente é Hacienda, á otras muchas cosas que mal sonaban. Y en la manera de su prision la contaba mui al reves de lo que está dicho. Lo que yo noto de esto es, que con todo lo que oí á Narvaez, (como yo se lo dixe) no puedo hallarle desculpa para su descuido, porque ninguna necesidad tenia de andar con Cortés en pláticas, sino estar en vela mejor que la que hizo. E á esto dacia ál que le havign vendido aquellos de quien se fiaba, que Cortés le havia sobornado." Ibid., lib. 33, cap. 12.

CHAPTER VIII.

DISCONTENT OF THE TROOPS.—INSURRECTION IN THE CAPITAL.—RETURN OF CORTES.—GENERAL SIGNS OF HOSTILITY.—MASSACRE BY ALVARADO.—RISING OF THE AZTECS.

1520.

THE tempest, that had raged so wildly during the night, passed away with the morning, which rose bright and unclouded on the field of battle. As the light advanced, it revealed more strikingly the disparity of the two forces so lately opposed to each other. Those of Narvaez could not conceal their chagrin, and murmurs of displeasure became audible, as they contrasted their own superior numbers and perfect appointments with the way-worn visages and rude attire of their handful of enemies! It was with some satisfaction, therefore, that the general beheld his dusky allies from Chinantla, two thousand in number, arrive upon the field. They were a fine, athletic set of men; and, as they advanced in a sort of promiscuous order, so to speak, with their gay banners of feather-work, and their long lances tipped with *itztli* and copper, glistening in the morning sun, they had something of an air of military discipline. They came too late for the action, indeed, but Cortés was not sorry to exhibit to his new followers the extent of his resources in the country. As he had now no occasion for his Indian allies, after a courteous reception and a liberal recompense, he dismissed them to their homes.[1]

[1] Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 6.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 47.—Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 123.

He then used his utmost endeavors to allay the discontent of the troops. He addressed them in his most soft and insinuating tones, and was by no means frugal of his promises.[2] He suited the action to the word. There were few of them but had lost their accoutrements, or their baggage, or horses taken and appropriated by the victors. This last article was in great request among the latter, and many a soldier, weary with the long marches, hitherto made on foot, had provided himself, as he imagined, with a much more comfortable, as well as creditable conveyance for the rest of the campaign. The general now commanded everything to be restored.[3] "They were embarked in the same cause," he said, "and should share with one another equally." He went still further; and distributed among the soldiers of Narvaez a quantity of gold and other precious commodities gathered from the neighboring tribes, or found in his rival's quarters.[4]

These proceedings, however politic in reference to his new followers, gave great disgust to his old. "Our commander," they cried, "has forsaken his friends for his foes. We stood by him in his hour of distress, and are rewarded with blows and wounds, while the spoil goes to our enemies!" The indignant soldiery commissioned the priest Olmedo and Alonso de Avila to lay their complaints before Cortés. The ambassadors stated them without reserve, comparing their commander's conduct to the ungrateful proceeding of Alexander, who, when he gained a victory, usually gave away more to his enemies than to the troops who enabled him to beat them. Cortés was greatly perplexed. Victorious or defeated, his path seemed equally beset with difficulties!

He endeavored to soothe their irritation by pleading the necessity of the case. "Our new comrades," he said, "are for-

[2] Diaz, who had often listened to it, thus notices his eloquence. "Comenzó vn parlamento por tan lindo estilo, y plática, tãbiẽ dichas cierto otras palabras mas sabrosas, y llenas de ofertas, q yo aquí no sabré escriuir." Ibid., cap. 122.

[3] Captain Diaz had secured for his share of the spoil of the Philistines, as he tells us, a very good horse with all his accoutrements, a brace of swords, three daggers, and a buckler,—a very beautiful outfit for the campaign. The general's orders were, naturally enough, not at all to his taste. Ibid., cap. 124.

[4] Narvaez alleges that Cortés plundered him of property to the value of 100,000 castellanos of gold! (Demanda de Zavallos en nombre de Narvaez, MS.) If so, the pillage of the leader may have supplied the means of liberality to the privates.

midable from their numbers, so much so, that we are even now much more in their power then they are in ours. Our only security in to make them not merely confederates, but friends. On any cause of disgust, we shall have the whole battle to fight over again, and, if they are united, under a much greater disadvantage than before. I have considered your interests," he added, "as much as my own. All that I have is yours. But why should there be any ground for discontent, when the whole country, with its riches, is before us? And our augmented strength must henceforth secure the undisturbed control of it!"

But Cortés did not rely wholly on argument for the restoration of tranquillity. He knew this to be incompatible with inaction and he made arrangements to divide his forces, at once, and to employ them on distant services. He selected a detachment of two hundred men, under Diego de Ordaz, whom he ordered to form the settlement before meditated on the Coatzacualco. A like number was sent with Velasquez de Leon, to secure the province of Panuco, some three degrees to the north, on the Mexican Gulf. Twenty in each detachment were drafted from his own veterans.

Two hundred men he despatched to Vera Cruz, with orders to have the rigging, iron, and everything portable on board of the fleet of Narvaez, brought on shore, and the vessels completely dismantled. He appointed a person named Cavallero, superintendent of the marine, with instructions, that, if any ships, hereafter, should enter the port, they should be dismantled in like manner, and their officers imprisoned on shore.[5]

But, while he was thus occupied with new schemes of discovery and conquest, he received such astounding intelligence from Mexico, as compelled him to concentrate all his faculties and his forces on that one point. The city was in a state of insurrection. No sooner had the struggle with his rival been decided, than Cortés despatched a courier with the tidings to the capital. In less than a fortnight, the same messenger returned with letters from Alvarado, conveying the alarming information that the Mexicans were in arms, and had vigorously assaulted the Spaniards in their own quarters. The enemy, he added, had burned

5 Demanda de Zavallos en nombre de Narvaez, MS.—Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 124.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 47.—Rel. Seg. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 130.—Camargo, Hist. de Tlascala, MS.

The visit of Narvaez left melancholy traces among the natives, that made it long remembered. A Negro in his suite brought with him the small-pox. The disease spread rapidly in that quarter of the country, and great numbers of the Indian population soon fell victims to it. Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 6.

the brigantines, by which Cortés had secured the means of retreat in case of the destruction of the bridges. They had attempted to force the defences, and had succeeded in partially undermining them, and they had overwhelmed the garrison with a tempest of missiles, which had killed several, and wounded a great number. The letter concluded with beseeching his commander to hasten to their relief, if he would save them, or keep his hold on the capital. These tidings were a heavy blow to the general,—the heavier, it seemed, coming, as they did, in the hour of triumph, when he had thought to have all his enemies at his feet. There was no room for hesitation. To lose their footing in the capital, the noblest city in the Western World, would be to lose the country itself, which looked up to it as its head.[6]

He opened the matter fully to his soldiers, calling on all who would save their countrymen to follow him. All declared their readiness to go; showing an alacrity, says Diaz, which some would have been slow to manifest, had they foreseen the future.

Cortés now made preparations for instant departure. He countermanded the orders previously given to Velasquez and Ordaz, and directed them to join him with their forces at Tlascala. He recalled the troops from Vera Cruz, leaving only a hundred men in garrison there, under command of one Rodrigo Rangre; for he could not spare the services of Sandoval at this crisis. He left his sick and wounded at Cempoalla, under charge of a small detachment, directing that they should follow as soon as they were in marching order. Having completed these arrangements, he set out from Cempoalla, well supplied with provisions by its hospitable cacique, who attended him some leagues on his way. The Totonac chief seems to have had an amiable facility of accommodating himself to the powers that were in the ascendant.

Nothing worthy of notice occurred during the first part of the march. The troops everywhere met with a friendly reception from the peasantry, who readily supplied their wants. Some time before reaching Tlascala, the route lay through a country thinly settled; and the army experienced considerable suffering from want of food, and still more from that of water. Their distress increased to an alarming degree, as, in the hurry of their forced march, they travelled with the meridian sun beating fiercely on their heads. Several faltered by the way, and throw-

[6] "Se perdia la mejor, y mas Noble Ciudad de todo lo neuvamente descubierto del Mundo; y ella perdida, se perdia todo lo que estaba ganado, por ser la Cabeza de todo, y á quien todos obedecian." Rel. Seg. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 131.

in themselves down by the road-side, seemed incapable of further effort, and almost indifferent to life.

In this extremity, Cortés sent forward a small detachment of horse to procure provisions in Tlascala and speedily followed in person. On arriving, he found abundant supplies already prepared by the hospitable natives. They were sent back to the troops; the stragglers were collected one by one; refreshments were administered; and the army, restored in strength and spirits, entered the republican capital.

Here they gathered little additional news respecting the events in Mexico, which a popular rumor attributed to the secret encouragement and machinations of Montezuma. Cortés was commodiously lodged in the quarters of Maxixca, one of the four chiefs of the republic. They readily furnished him with two thousand troops. There was no want of heartiness' when the war was with their ancient enemy the Aztec.[7]

The Spanish commander, on reviewing his forces, after the junction with his two captains, found that they amounted to about a thousand foot, and one hundred horse, besides the Tlascalan levies.[8] In the infantry were nearly a hundred arquebusiers, with as many crossbow-men; and the part of the army brought over by Narvaez was admirably equipped. It was inferior, however, to his own veterans in what is better than any outward appointments,—military training, and familiarity with the peculiar service in which they were engaged.

Leaving these friendly quarters, the Spaniards took a more northerly route, as more direct than that by which they had before penetrated into the Valley. It was the road to Tezcuco. It still compelled them to climb the same bold range of the Cordilleras, which attains its greatest elevation in the two mighty *volcans* at whose base they had before travelled. The sides of the sierra were clothed with dark forests of pine, cypress, and cedar,[9] through which glimpses now and then opened into fath-

[7] Ibid., ubi supra.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 13, 14.—Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 124, 125.—Peter Martyr, De Orbe Novo, dec. 5, cap 5.—Camargo, Hist. de Tlascala, MS.

[8] Gomara, Crónica, cap. 103.—Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 7.

Bernal Diaz raises the amount to 1300 foot and 96 horse. (Ibid., cap. 125.) Cortés diminishes it to less than half that number. (Rel. Seg., ubi supra.) The estimate cited in the text from the two preceding authorities corresponds nearly enough with that already given from official documents of the forces of Cortés and Narvaez before the junction.

[9] "Las sierras altas de Tetzcuco á que le mostrasen desde la mas alta cumbre de aquellas montañas y sierras de Tetzcuco, que son las sierras de Tlallocan altísimas y humbrosas, en las cuales he estado y visto y puedo decir que son bastante para descubrir el un emisferio y otro, porque son los may

omless dells and valleys, whose depths far down in the sultry climate of the tropics, were lost in a glowing wilderness of vegetation. From the crest of the mountain range the eye travelled over the broad expanse of country, which they had lately crossed, far away to the green plains of Cholula. Towards the west, they looked down on the Mexican Valley, from a point of view wholly different from that which they had before occupied, but still offering the same beautiful spectacle, with its lakes trembling in the light, its gay cities and villas floating on their bosom, its burnished *teocallis* touched with fire, its cultivated slopes and dark hills of porphyry stretching away in dim perspective to the verge of the horizon. At their feet lay the city of Tezcuco, which, modestly retiring behind her deep groves of cypress, formed a contrast to her more ambitious rival on the other side of the lake, who seemed to glory in the unveiled splendors of her charms as Mistress of the Valley.

As they descended into the populous plains their reception by the natives was very different from that which they had experienced on the preceding visit. There were no groups of curious peasantry to be seen gazing at them as they passed, and offering their simple hospitality. The supplies they asked were not refused, but granted with an ungracious air, that showed the blessing of the giver did not accompany them. This air of reserve became still more marked as the army entered the suburbs of the ancient capital of the Acolhuans. No one came forth to greet them, and the population seemed to have dwindled away,—so many of them were withdrawn to the neighboring scene of hostilities at Mexico.[10] Their cold reception was a sensible mortification to the veterans of Cortés, who, judging from the past, had boasted to their new comrades of the sensation their presence would excite among the natives.

The cacique of the place, who, as it may be remembered, had been created through the influence of Cortés, was himself absent. The general drew an ill omen from all these circumstances, which even raised an uncomfortable apprehension in his mind respecting the fate of the garrison in Mexico.[11]

ores puertos y mas altos de esta Nueva España, de árboles y montes de grandísima altura, de cedras, cipreses y pinares." Camargo, Hist. de Tlascala, MS.

[10] The historian partly explains the reason. "En la misma Ciudad de Tescuco habia algunos apasionados de los deudos y amigos de los que matâron Pedro de Alvarado y sus compañeros en México." Ixtlilxochitl, Hist. Chich., MS., cap. 88.

[11] "En todo el camino nunca me salió á recibir ninguna Persona de el dicho Muteczuma, como ântes lo solian facer; y toda la Tierra estaba alborotada, y casi despoblada: de que concebí mala sospecha, creyendo que los Espa-

But his doubts were soon dispelled by the arrival of a messenger in a canoe from that city, whence he had escaped through the remissness of the enemy, or, perhaps, with their connivance. He brought despatches from Alvarado, informing his commander that the Mexicans had for the last fortnight desisted from active hostilities, and converted their operations into a blockade. The garrison had suffered greatly, but Alvarado expressed his conviction that the siege would be raised, and tranquillity restored, on the approach of his countrymen. Montezuma sent a messenger, also, to the same effect. At the same time he exculpated himself from any part in the late hostilities, which he said had not only been conducted without his privity, but contrary to his inclination and efforts.

The Spanish general, having halted long enough to refresh his wearied troops, took up his march along the southern margin of the lake, which led him over the same causeway by which he had before entered the capital. It was the day consecrated to St. John the Baptist, the 24th of June, 1520. But how different was the scene from that presented on his former entrance![12] No crowds now lined the roads, no boats swarmed on the lake, filled with admiring spectators. A single pirogue might now and then be seen in the distance, like a spy stealthily watching their movements, and darting away the moment it had attracted notice. A deathlike stillness brooded over the scene, —a stillness that spoke louder to the heart, than the acclamations of multitudes.

Cortés rode on moodily at the head of his battalions, finding abundant food for meditation, doubtless, in this change of circumstances. As if to dispel these gloomy reflections, he ordered his trumpets to sound, and their clear, shrill notes, borne across the waters, told the inhabitants of the beleaguered fortress, that their friends were at hand. They were answered by a joyous peal of artillery, which seemed to give momentary exhilaration to the troops, as they quickened their pace, traversed the great drawbridges, and once more found themselves within the walls of the imperial city.

The appearance of things here were not such as to allay their apprehensions. In some places they beheld the smaller

fioles que en la dicha Cuidad habian quedado, eran muertos." Rel. Seg. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 132.

12 "Y como asomó á la vista de la Ciudad de México, parecióle que estaba toda yerma, y que no parecia persona por todos los caminos, ni casas, ni plazas, ni nadie le salió á recibir, ni de los suyos, ni de los enemigos; y fué esto señal de indignacion y enemistad por lo que habia pasado." Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva España, MS., lib. 12, cap. 19.

bridges removed, intimating too plainly, now that their brigantines were destroyed, how easy it would be to cut off their retreat.[13] The town seemed even more deserted than Tezcuco. Its once busy and crowded population had mysteriously vanished. And as the Spaniards defiled through the empty streets, the tramp of their horses' feet upon the pavement was answered by dull and melancholy echoes that fell heavily on their hearts. With saddened feelings they reached the great gates of the palace of Axayacatl. The gates were thrown open, and Cortés and his veterans, rushing in, were cordially embraced by their companions in arms, while both parties soon forgot the present in the interesting recapitulation of the past.[14]

The first inquiries of the general were respecting the origin of the tumult. The accounts were various. Some imputed it to the desire of the Mexicans to release their sovereign from confinement; others to the design of cutting off the garrison while crippled by the absence of Cortés and their countrymen. All agreed, however, in tracing the immediate cause to the violence of Alvarado. It was common for the Aztecs to celebrate an annual festival in May, in honor of their patron war-god. It was called the "incensing of Huitzilopotchli," and was commemorated by sacrifice, religious songs, and dances, in which most of the nobles engaged, for it was one of the great festivals which displayed the pomp of the Aztec ritual. As it was held in the court of the *teocalli*, in the immediate neighborhood of the Spanish quarters, and as a part of the temple itself was reserved for a Christian chapel, the caciques asked permission of Alvarado to perform their rites there. They requested also, it is said, to be allowed the presence of Montezuma. This latter petition Alvarado declined, in obedience to the injunctions of Cortés; but acquiesced in the former, on condition that the Aztecs should celebrate no human sacrifices, and should come without weapons.

They assembled accordingly on the day appointed, to the number of six hundred, at the smallest computation.[15] They

[13] "Pontes ligneos qui tractim lapideos, interscant, sublatos, ac vias aggeribus munitas reperit."P. Martyr, De Orbe Novo, dec. 5, cap. 5.

[14] Probanza á pedimento de Juan de Lexalde, MS.,—Rel. Seg. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 133.

"Esto causó gran admiracion en todos los que venian, pero no dejáron de marchar, hasta entrar donde estaban los Españoles acorralados. Venian todos muy casados y muy fatigados y con mucho deseo de llegar á donde estaban sus hermanos; los de dentro cuando los viéron, recibiéron singular consolacion y esfuerzo y recibiéronlos con la artillería que tenian, saludándolos, y dándolos el parabien de su venida." Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva Espana, MS., lib. 12, cap. 22.

[15] "E así los Indios, todos Señores, mas de 600 desnudos é con mucnas

were dressed in their most magnificent gala costumes, with their graceful mantles of feather-work, sprinkled with precious stones, and their necks, arms, and legs ornamented with collars and bracelets of gold. They had that love of gaudy splendor which belongs to semi-civilized nations, and on these occasions displayed all the pomp and profusion of their barbaric wardrobes.

Alvarado and his soldiers attended as spectators, some of them taking their station at the gates, as if by chance, and others mingling in the crowd. They were all armed, a circumstance, which, as it was usual, excited no attention. The Aztecs were soon engrossed by the exciting movement of the dance, accompanied by their religious chant and wild, discordant minstrelsy. While thus occupied, Alvarado and his men, at a concerted signal, rushed with drawn swords on their victims. Unprotected by armor or weapons of any kind, they were hewn down without resistance by their assailants, who, in their bloody work, says a contemporary, showed no touch of pity or compunction.[16] Some fled to the gates, but were caught on the long pikes of the soldiers. Others, who attempted to scale the *Coatepantli*, or Wall of Serpents, as it was called, which surrounded the area, shared the like fate, or were cut to pieces, or shot by the ruthless soldiery. The pavement, says a writer of the age, ran with streams of blood, like water in a heavy shower,[17] Not an Aztec, of all that gay company, was left alive! It was repeating the dreadful scene of Cholula, with the disgraceful addition, that the Spaniards, not content with slaughtering their victims, rifled them of the precious ornaments on their persons! On this sad day fell the flower of the Aztec nobility. Not a family of note, but had mourning and desolation brought within its walls. And many a doleful ballad, rehearsing the tragic incidents of the story, and adapted to the plaintive national airs, continued to be chanted by the natives long after the subjugation of the country.[18]

joyas de oro é hermosos penachos, é muchas piedras preciosas, é como mas aderezados é gentiles hombres se pudiéron é supiéron aderezar, é sin arma alguna defensiva ni ofensiva bailaban é cantaban é hacian su areito é fiesta segun su costumbre." (Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 54.) Some writers carry the number as high as eight hundred or even one thousand. Las Casas, with a more modest exaggeration than usual, swells it only to two thousand. Brevíssima Relatione, p. 48.

[16] "Sin duelo ni piedad Christiana los acuchilló, i mató." Gomara, Crónica, cap. 104.

[17] "Fué tan grande el derramamiento de Sangre, que corrian arroyos de ella por el Patio, como agua cuando mucho llueve." Sahagun, Hist. de Nuevo España, MS., lib. 12, cap. 20.

[18] "Y de aquí á que se acabe el mundo, ó ellos del todo se acaben, no dexarán de lamentar, y cantar en sus areytos, y bayles, como en romances, que acá dezimos, aquella calamidad, y perdida de la sucession de toda su

Various explanations have been given of this atrocious deed. But few historians have been content to admit that of Alvarado himself. According to this, intelligence had been obtained through his spies — some of them Mexicans — of an intended rising of the Indians. The celebration of this festival was fixed on, as the period for its execution, when the caciques would be met together and would easily rouse the people to support them. Alvarado, advised of all this, had forbidden them to wear arms at their meeting. While affecting to comply, they had secreted their weapons in the neighboring arsenals, whence they could readily withdraw them. But his own blow, by anticipating theirs, defeated the design, and, as he confidently hoped, would deter the Aztecs from a similar attempt in future.[19]

Such is the account of the matter given by Alvarado. But, if true, why did he not verify his assertion by exposing the arms thus secreted? Why did he not vindicate his conduct in the eyes of the Mexicans generally, by publicly avowing the treason of the nobles, as was done by Cortés at Cholula? The whole looks much like an apology devised after the commission of the deed, to cover up its atrocity.

Some contemporaries assign a very different motive for the massacre, which, according to them, originated in the cupidity of the Conquerors, as shown by their plundering the bodies of their victims.[20] Bernal Diaz, who, though not present, had conversed familiarly with those who were, vindicates them from the charge of this unworthy motive. According to him, Alvarado struck the blow in order to intimidate the Aztecs from any insurrectionary movement.[21] But whether he had reason to ap-

nobleza, de que se preciauan de tantos años atras." Las Casas, Brevíssima Relatione, p. 49.

[19] See Alvarado's reply to queries of Cortés, as reported by Diaz, (Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 125,) with some additional particulars in Torquemada, (Monarch. Ind., lib. 4, cap. 66,) Solís, (Conquista, lib. 4, cap. 12,) and Herrera, (Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 8,) who all seem content to endorse Alvarado's version of the matter. I find no other authority, of any weight, in the same charitable vein.

[20] Oviedo mentions a conversation which he had some years after this tragedy with a noble Spaniard, Don Thoan Cano, who came over in the train of Narvaez, and was present at all the subsequent operations of the army. He married a daughter of Montezuma, and settled in Mexico after the Conquest. Oviedo describes him as a man of sense and integrity. In answer to the historian's queries respecting the cause of the rising, he said, that Alvarado had wantonly perpetrated the massacre from pure avarice: and the Aztecs, enraged at such unprovoked and unmerited cruelty, rose, as they well might, to avenge it. (Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 54.) See the original dialogue in *Appendix*, *Part* 2, *No.* 11.

[21] "Verdaderamente dió en ellos por metelles temor." Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 125.

prehend such, or even affected to do so before the massacre, the old chronicler does not inform us.

On reflection, it seems scarcely possible that so foul a deed, and one involving so much hazard to the Spaniards themselves, should have been perpetrated from the mere desire of getting possession of the baubles worn on the persons of the natives. It is more likely this was an afterthought, suggested to the rapacious soldiery by the display of the spoil before them. It is not improbable that Alvarado may have gathered rumors of a conspiracy among the nobles,—rumors, perhaps, derived through the Tlascalans, their inveterate foes, and for that reason very little deserving of credit.[22] He proposed to defeat it by imitating the example of his commander at Cholula. But he omitted to imitate his leader in taking precautions against the subsequent rising of the populace. And he grievously miscalculated, when he confounded the bold and warlike Aztec with the effeminate Cholulan.

No sooner was the butchery accomplished, than the tidings spread like wildfire through the capital. Men could scarcely credit their senses. All they had hitherto suffered, the desecration of their temples, the imprisonment of their sovereign, the insults heaped on his person, all were forgotten in this one act.[23] Every feeling of long smothered hostility and rancor now burst forth in the cry for vengeance. Every former sentiment of superstitious

[22] Such, indeed, is the statement of Ixtlilxochitl, derived, as he says, from the native Tezcucan annalists. According to them, the Tlascalans, urged by their hatred of the Aztecs, and their thirst for plunder, persuaded Alvarado, nothing loth, that the nobles meditated a rising on the occasion of these festivities. The testimony is important, and I give it in the author's words. "Fué que ciertos Tlascaltecas (segun las Historias de Tescuco que son las que Io sigo y la carta que otras veces he referido) por embidia lo uno acordándose que en semejante fiesta los Mexicanos solian sacrificar gran suma de cautivos de los de la Nacion Tlascalteca, y lo otro que era la mejor ocasion que ellos podian tener para poder hinchir las manos de despojos y hartar su codicia, y vengarse de sus Enemigos, (porque hasta entonces no habian tenido lugar, ni Cortés se les diera, ni admitiera sus dichos, porque siempre hacia las cosas con mucho acuerdo) fuéron con esta invencion al capitan Pedro de Albarado, que estaba en lugar de Cortés, el qual no fué menester mucho para darles crédito porque tan buenos filos, y pensamientos tenia como ellos, y mas viendo que allí en aquella fiesta habian acudido todos los Señores y Cabezas del Imperio y que muertos no tenian mucho trabajo en sojuzgarles." Hist. Chich., MS., cap. 88.

[23] Martyr well recapitulates these grievances, showing that they seemed such in the eyes of the Spaniards themselves,—of those, at least, whose judgment was not warped by a share in the transactions. "Emori statuerunt malle, quam diutius ferre tales hospites qui regem suum sub tuteris vitæ specie detineant, civitatem occupent, antiquos hostes Tascaltecanos et alios præterea in contumeliam ante illorum oculos ipsorum impensa conserunt; . . . . . qui demum simulachra deorum confregerint, et ritus veteres ac ceremonias antiquas illis abstulerint." De Orbe Novo, dec. 5, cap. 5.

dread was merged in that of inextinguishable hatred. It required no effort of the priests—though this was not wanting—to fan these passions into a blaze. The city rose in arms to a man, and on the following dawn, almost before the Spaniards could secure themselves in their defences, they were assaulted with desperate fury. Some of the assailants attempted to scale the walls; others succeeded in partially undermining and in setting fire to the works. Whether they would have succeeded in carrying the place by storm is doubtful. But, at the prayers of the garrison, Montezuma himself interfered, and mounting the battlements addressed the populace, whose fury he endeavored to mitigate by urging considerations for his own safety. They respected their monarch so far as to desist from further attempts to storm the fortress, but changed their operations into a regular blockade. They threw up works around the palace to prevent the egress of the Spaniards, They suspended the *tianguez*, or market, to preclude the possibility of their enemy's obtaining supplies and they then quietly sat down, with feelings of sullen desperation, waiting for the hour when famine should throw their victims into their hands.

The condition of the besieged, meanwhile, was sufficiently distressing. Their magazines of provisions, it is true, were not exhausted; but they suffered greatly from want of water, which, within the inclosure, was exceedingly brackish, for the soil was saturated with the salt of the surrounding elements. In this extremity, they discovered, it is said, a spring of fresh water in the area. Such springs were known in some other parts of the city; but, discovered first under these circumstances, it was accounted as nothing less than a miracle. Still they suffered much from their past encounters. Seven Spaniards, and many Tlascalans, had fallen and there was scarcely one of either nation who had not received several wounds. In this situation, far from their own countrymen, without expectation of succor from abroad, they seemed to have no alternative before them, but a lingering death by famine, or one more dreadful on the altar of sacrifice. From this gloomy state they were relieved by the coming of their comrades.[24]

Cortés calmly listened to the explanation made by Alvarado. But, before it was ended, the conviction must have forced itself on his mind, that he had made a wrong selection for this important post. Yet the mistake was natural. Alvarado was a cavalier of high family, gallant and chivalrous, and his warm personal friend. He had talents for action, was possessed of firmness and

[24] Camargo, Hist. de Tlascala, MS.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 13, 47.—Gomara, Crónica, cap. 105.

intrepidity, while his frank and dazzling manners made the *Tonatiuh* an especial favorite with the Mexicans. But, underneath this showy exterior, the future conqueror of Guatemala concealed a heart rash, rapacious, and cruel. He was altogether destitute of that moderation, which, in the delicate position he occupied, was a quality of more worth than all the rest.

When Alvarado had concluded his answers to the several interrogatories of Cortés, the brow of the latter darkened, as he said to his lieutenant, "You have done badly. You have been false to your trust. Your conduct has been that of a madman!" And, turning abruptly on his heel, he left him in undisguised displeasure.

Yet this was not a time to break with one so popular, and, in many respects so important to him, as this captain, much less to inflict on him the punishment he merited. The Spaniards were like mariners laboring in a heavy tempest, whose bark nothing but the dexterity of the pilot, and the hearty coöperation of the crew can save from foundering. Dissensions at such a moment must be fatal. Cortés, it is true, felt strong in his present resources. He now found himself at the head of a force which could scarcely amount to less than twelve hundred and fifty Spaniards, and eight thousand native warriors, principally Tlascalans.[25] But, though relying on this to overawe resistance, the very augmentation of numbers increased the difficulty of subsistence. Discontented with himself, disgusted with his officers, and embarrassed by the disastrous consequences in which Alvarado's intemperance had involved him, he became irritable, and indulged in a petulance by no means common; for, though a man of lively passions, by nature, he held them habitually under control.[26]

On the day that Cortés arrived, Montezuma had left his own quarters to welcome him. But the Spanish commander, distrusting, as it would seem, however unreasonably, his good faith, received him so coldly that the Indian monarch withdrew, displeased and dejected, to his apartment. As the Mexican populace made no show of submission, and brought no supplies to the army, the general's ill-humor with the emperor continued.

[25] He left in garrison, on his departure from Mexico, 140 Spaniards and about 6500 Tlascalans, including a few Cempoallan warriors. Supposing five hundred of these—a liberal allowance—to have perished in battle and otherwise, it would still leave a number, which, with the reinforcement now brought, would raise the amount to that stated n the text.

[26] "Y viendo-que todo estaua muy al contrario de sus pensamientos, q aũ de comer no nos dauan, estaua muy airado, y sobervio cõ la mucha gẽte de Españoles que traia, y muy triste, y mohino." Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 126.

When, therefore, Montezuma sent some of the nobles to ask an interview with Cortés, the latter, turning to his own officers, haughtily exclaimed, "What have I to do with this dog of a king who suffers us to starve before his eyes?"

His captains, among whom were Olid, de Avila, and Velasquez de Leon, endeavored to mitigate his anger, reminding him, in respectful terms, that, had it not been for the emperor, the garrison might even now have been overwhelmed by the enemy. This remonstrance only chafed him the more. "Did not the dog," he asked, repeating the opprobrious epithet, "betray us in his communications with Narvaez? And does he not now suffer his markets to be closed, and leave us to die of famine?" Then turning fiercely to the Mexicans, he said, "Go tell your master and his people to open the markets, or we will do it for them at their cost!" The chiefs, who had gathered the import of his previous taunt on their sovereign, from his tone and gesture, or perhaps from some comprehension of his language, left his presence swelling with resentment; and, in communicating his message, took care it should lose none of its effect.[27]

Shortly after, Cortés, at the suggestion, it is said, of Montezuma, released his brother Cuitlahua, lord of Iztapalapan, who, it will be remembered, had been seized on suspicion of coöperating with the chief of Tezcuco in his meditated revolt. It was thought he might be of service in allaying the present tumult, and bringing the populace to a better state of feeling. But he returned no more to the fortress.[28] He was a bold, ambitious prince, and the injuries he had received from the Spaniards rankled deep in his bosom. He was presumptive heir to the crown, which, by the Aztec laws of succession, descended much more frequently in a collateral than in a direct line. The people welcomed him as the representative of their sovereign, and chose him to supply the place of Montezuma during his captivity. Cuitlahua willingly accepted the post of honor and of danger. He was an experienced warrior, and exerted himself to reorganize the disorderly levies, and to arrange a more efficient plan of operations. The effect was soon visible.

Cortés meanwhile had so little doubt of his ability to overawe the insurgents, that he wrote to that effect to the garrison of Villa Rica, by the same despatches in which he informed them of his safe arrival in the capital. But scarcely had his messen-

[27] The scene is reported by Diaz, who was present. (Ibid., cap. 126.) See, also, the Chronicle of Gomara, the chaplain of Cortés. Cap. 106.) It is further confirmed by Don Thoan Cano, an eyewitness, in his conversation with Oviedo. See *Appendix, Part 2, No.* 11.

[28] Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 8.

ger been gone half an hour, when he returned breathless with terror, and covered with wounds. "The city," he said, "was all in arms! The drawbridges were raised, and the enemy would soon be upon them!" He spoke truth. It was not long before a hoarse, sullen sound became audible, like that of the roaring of distant waters. It grew louder and louder; till, from the parapet surrounding the inclosure, the great avenues which led to it might be seen dark with the masses of warriors, who came rolling on in a confused tide towards the fortress. At the same time, the terraces and *azoteas* or flat roofs, in the neighborhood, were thronged with combatants brandishing their missiles, who seemed to have risen up as if by magic![29] It was a spectacle to appal the stoutest.—But the dark storm to which it was the prelude, and which gathered deeper and deeper round the Spaniards during the remainder of their residence in the capital, must form the subject of a separate Book.

[29] "El qual Mensajero bolviô dende á media hora todo descalabrado, y herido, dando voces, que todos los Indios de la Ciudad venian de Guerra y que tenian todas las Puentes alzadas; é junto tras él da sobre nosotros tanta multitud de Gente por todas partes, que ni las calles ni Azoteas se parecian con Gente; la qual venia con los mayores alaridos, y grita mas espantable, que en el Mundo se puede pensar." Rel. Seg. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 134.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 13.

Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo y Valdés was born in 1478. He belonged to an ancient family of the Asturias. Every family, indeed, claims to be ancient in this last retreat of the intrepid Goths. He was early introduced at court, and was appointed page to Prince Juan, the only son of Ferdinand and Isabella, on whom their hopes, and those of the nation, deservedly rested. Oviedo accompanied the camp in the latter campaigns of the Moorish war, and was present at the memorable siege of Granada. On the untimely death of his royal master in 1496, he passed over to Italy and entered the service of King Frederick of Naples. At the death of that prince he returned to his own country, and in the beginning of the sixteenth century we find him again established in Castile, where he occupied the place of keeper of the crown jewels. In 1513, he was named by Ferdinand the Catholic *veedor*, or inspector of the gold founderies in the American colonies. Oviedo, accordingly, transported himself to the New World, where he soon took a commission under Pedrarias, governor of Darien; and shared in the disastrous fortunes of that colony. He obtained some valuable privileges from the Crown, built a fortress on Tierra Firme and entered into traffic with the natives. In this we may presume he was prosperous, since we find him at length established with a wife and family at Hispaniola, or Fernandina, as it was then called. Although he continued to make his principal residence in the New World, he made occasional visits to Spain; and in 1526, published at Madrid his *Sumario*. It is dedicated to the Emperor Charles the Fifth, and contains an account of the West Indies, their geography, climate, the races who inhabited them, together with their animals and

vegetable productions. The subject was of great interest to the inquisitive minds of Europe, and one of which they had previously gleaned but scanty information. In 1535, in a subsequent visit to Spain, Oviedo gave to the world the first volume of his great work, which he had been many years in compiling,—the "Historia de las Indias Occidentales." In the same year, he was appointed by Charles the Fifth alcayde of the fortress of Hispaniola. He continued in the island the ten following years, actively engaged in the prosecution of his historical researches, and then returned for the last time to his native land. The veteran scholar was well received at court, and obtained the honorable appointment of Chronicler of the Indies. He occupied this post until the period of his death, which took place at Valladolid in 1557, in the seventy-ninth year of his age, at the very time when he was employed in preparing the residue of his history for the press.

Considering the intimate footing on which Oviedo lived with the eminent persons of his time, it is singular that so little is preserved of his personal history and his character. Nic. Antonio speaks of him as a "man of large experience, courteous in his manners, and of great probity." His long and active life is a sufficient voucher for his experience, and one will hardly doubt his good breeding, when we know the high society in which he moved. He left a large mass of manuscripts, embracing a vast range both of civil and natural history. By far the most important is his *Historia General de las Indias*. It is divided into three parts, containing fifty books. The first part, consisting of nineteen books, is the one already noticed as having been published during his lifetime. It gives in a more extended form the details of geographical and natural history embodied in his *Sumario*, with a narrative, moreover, of the discoveries and conquests of the Islands. A translation of this portion of the work was made by the learned Ramusio, with whom Oviedo was in correspondence, and is published in the third volume of his inestimable collection. The two remaining parts relate to the conquests of Mexico, of Peru, and other countries of South America. It is that portion of the work consulted for these pages. The manuscript was deposited, at his death, in the *Casa de la Contratacion*, at Seville. It afterwards came into the possession of the Dominican monastery of Monserrat. In process of time, mutilated copies found their way into several private collections; when, in 1775, Don Francisco Cerda y Rico, an officer in the Indian department, ascertained the place in which the original was preserved, and, prompted by his literary zeal, obtained an order from the government for its publication. Under his supervision the work was put in order for the press, and Oviedo's biographer, Alvarez y Baena, assures us that a complete edition of it, prepared with the greatest care, will soon be given to the world. (Hijos de Madrid, (Madrid, 1790,) tom. II. pp. 354–361.) It still remains in manuscript.

No country has been more fruitful in the field of historical composition than Spain. Her ballads are chronicles done into verse. The chronicles themselves date from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Every city, every small town, every great family, and many a petty one, has its chronicler. These were often mere monkish chroniclers, who in the seclusion of the convent found leisure for literary occupation. Or, not unfrequently, they were men who had taken part in the affairs they described, more expert with the sword than with the pen. The compositions of this latter class have a general character of that indifference to fine writing, which shows a mind intent on the facts with which it is occupied, much more than on forms of expression. The monkish chroniclers, on the other hand, often make a pedantic display of obsolete erudition, which contrasts rather whimsically with the homely texture of the narrative. The chronicles of both the one and the other class of writers may frequently claim the merit of picturesque and

animated detail, showing that the subject was one of living interest, and that the writer's heart was in his subject.

Many of the characteristic blemishes, of which I have been speaking, may be charged on Oviedo. His style is cast in no classic mould. His thoughts find themselves a vent in tedious, interminable sentences, that may fill the reader with despair; and the thread of the narrative is broken by impertinent episodes that lead to nothing. His scholarship was said to be somewhat scanty. One will hardly be led to doubt it, from the tawdry display of Latin quotations with which he garnishes his pages, like a poor gallant, who would make the most of his little store of finery. He affected to take the elder Pliny as his model, as appears from the preface to his *Sumario.* But his own work fell far short of the model of erudition and eloquence which that great writer of natural history has bequeathed to us.

Yet, with his obvious defects, Oviedo showed an enlightened curiosity, and a shrewd spirit of observation, which place him far above the ordinary range of chroniclers. He may even be said to display a philosophic tone in his reflections, though his philosophy must be regarded as cold and unscrupulous, wherever the rights of the Aborigines are in question. He was indefatigable in amassing materials for his narratives, and for this purpose maintained a correspondence with the most eminent men of his time, who had taken part in the transactions which he commemorates. He even condescended to collect information from more humble sources, from popular tradition and the reports of the common soldiers. Hence his work often presents a medley of inconsistent and contradictory details, which perplex the judgment, making it exceedingly difficult, at this distance of time, to disentangle the truth. It was, perhaps, for this reason, that Las Casas complimented the author by declaring, that "his works were a wholesale fabrication, as full of lies as of pages!" Yet another explanation of this severe judgment may be found in the different characters of the two men. Oviedo shared in the worldly feelings common to the Spanish Conquerors; and, while he was ever ready to magnify the exploits of his countrymen, held lightly the claims and the sufferings of the unfortunate Aborigines. He was incapable of appreciating the generous philanthropy of Las Casas, or of rising to his lofty views, which he doubtless derided as those of a benevolent, it might be, but visionary, fanatic. Las Casas, on the other hand, whose voice had been constantly uplifted against the abuses of the Conquerors, was filled with abhorrence at the sentiments avowed by Oviedo, and it was natural that his aversion to the principles should be extended to the person who professed them. Probably no two men could have been found less competent to form a right estimate of each other.

Oviedo showed the same activity in gathering materials for natural history, as he had done for the illustration of civil. He collected the different plants of the Islands in his garden, and domesticated many of the animals, or kept them in confinement under his eye, where he could study their peculiar habits. By this course, if he did not himself rival Pliny and Hernandez in science, he was, at least, enabled to furnish the man of science with facts of the highest interest and importance.

Besides these historical writings, Oviedo left a work in six volumes, called by the whimsical title of *Quincuagenas.* It consists of imaginary dialogues between the most eminent Spaniards of the time, in respect to their personal history, their families, and genealogy. It is a work of inestimable value to the historian of the times of Ferdinand and Isabella, and of Charles the Fifth. But it has attracted little attention in Spain, where it still remains in manuscript. A complete copy of Oviedo's History of the Indies is in the archives of the Royal Academy of History in Madrid, and it is understood that this body has now an edition prepared for the press. Such parts as are

literally transcribed from preceding n. ıtives, like the Letters of Cortés, which Oviedo transferred without scr. e entire and unmutilated into his own pages, though enlivened, it is tru y occasional criticism of his own, might as well be omitted. But the remainder of the great work affords a mass of multifarious information which would make an important contribution to the colonial history of Spain.

An authority of frequent reference in these pages is Diego Muños Camargo. He was a noble Tlascalan *mestee*, and lived in the latter half of the sixteenth century. He was educated in the Christian faith, and early instructed in Castilian, in which tongue he composed his *Historia de Tlascala*. In this work he introduces the reader to the different members of the great Nahuatlac family, who came successively up the Mexican plateau. Born and bred among the Aborigines of the country, when the practices of the Pagan age had not wholly become obsolete, Camargo was in a position perfectly to comprehend the condition of the ancient inhabitants ; and his work supplies much curious and authentic information respecting the social and religious institutions of the land at the time of the Conquest. His patriotism warms, as he recounts the old hostilities of his countrymen with the Aztecs, and it is singular to observe how the detestation of the rival nations survived their common subjection under the Castilian yoke.

Camargo embraces in his narrative an account of this great event, and of the subsequent settlement of the country. As one of the Indian family, we might expect to see his chronicle reflect the prejudices, or, at least, partialities, of the Indian. But the Christian convert yielded up his sympathies as freely to the Conquerors as to his own countrymen. The desire to magnify the exploits of the latter, and at the same time to do full justice to the prowess of the white men, produces occasionally a most whimsical contrast in his pages, giving the story a strong air of inc. . istency. In point of literary execution the work has little merit ; as great, however, as could be expected from a native Indian, indebted for his knowledge of the tongue to such imperfect instruction as he could obtain from the missionaries. Yet in style of composition it may compare not unfavorably with the writings of some of the missionaries themselves.

The original manuscript was long preserved in the convent of *San Felipe Neri* in Mexico, where Torquemada, as appears from occasional references, had access to it. It has escaped the attention of other historians, but was embraced by Muñoz in his magnificent collection, and deposited in the archives of the Royal Academy of History at Madrid ; from which source the copy in my possession was obtained. It bears the title of *Pedazo de Historia Verdadera*, and is without the author's name, and without division into books or chapters.

BOOK FIFTH.

EXPULSION FROM MEXICO.

BOOK V.

EXPULSION FROM MEXICO.

CHAPTER I.

DESPERATE ASSAULT ON THE QUARTERS.—FURY OF THE MEXICANS.—SALLY OF THE SPANIARDS.—MONTEZUMA ADDRESSES THE PEOPLE.—DANGEROUSLY WOUNDED.

1520.

THE palace of Axayacatl, in which the Spaniards were quartered, was, as the reader may remember, a vast, irregular pile of stone buildings, having but one floor, except in the centre, where another story was added, consisting of a suite of apartments which rose like turrets on the main building of the edifice. A vast area stretched around, encompassed by a stone wall of no great height. This was supported by towers or bulwarks at certain intervals, which gave it some degree of strength, not, indeed, as compared with European fortifications, but sufficient to resist the rude battering enginery of the Indians. The parapet had been pierced here and there with embrasures for the artillery, which consisted of thirteen guns; and smaller apertures were made in other parts for the convenience of the arquebusiers. The Spanish forces found accommodations within the great building; but the numerous body of Tlascalan auxiliaries could have had no other shelter than what was afforded by barracks or sheds hastily constructed for the purpose in the spacious courtyard. Most of them, probably, bivouacked under the open sky, in a climate milder than that to which they were accustomed among the rude hills of their native land. Thus crowded into a small and compact compass, the whole army could be assembled at a moment's notice; and, as the Spanish commander was careful to enforce the strictest discipline and vigilance, it was scarce-

ly possible that he could be taken by surprise. No sooner, therefore, did the trumpet call to arms, as the approach of the enemy was announced, than every soldier was at his post, the cavalry mounted, the artillery-men at their guns, and the archers and arquebusiers stationed so at to give the assailants a warm reception.

On they came, with the companies, or irregular masses, into which the multitude was divided, rushing forward each in its own dense column, with many a gay banner displayed, and many a bright gleam of light reflected from helmet, arrow, and spear-head, as they were tossed about in their disorderly array. As they drew near the inclosure, the Aztecs set up a hideous yell, or rather that shrill whistle used in fight by the nations of Anahuac, which rose far above the sound of shell and atabal, and their other rude instruments of warlike melody. They followed this by a tempest of missiles,—stones, darts, and arrows,—which fell thick as rain on the besieged, while volleys of the same kind descended from the crowded terraces in the neighborhood.[1]

The Spaniards waited until the foremost column had arrived within the best distance for giving effect to their fire, when a general discharge of artillery and arquebuses swept the ranks of the assailants, and mowed them down by hundreds.[2] The Mexicans were familiar with the report of these formidable engines, as they had been harmlessly discharged on some holyday festival; but never till now had they witnessed their murderous power. They stood aghast for a moment, as with bewildered looks they staggered under the fury of the fire;[3] but, soon

[1] "Eran tantas las Piedras, que nos echaban con Hondas dentro en la Fortaleza, que no parecia sino que el Cielo las llovia; é las Flechas, y Tiraderas eran tantas, que todas las paredes y Patios estaban llenos, que casi no podiamos andar con ellas." (Rel. Seg. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 134.) No wonder that they should have found some difficulty in wading through the arrows, if Herrera's account be correct, that *forty cart-loads* of them were gathered up and burnt by the besieged every day! Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 9.

[2] "Luego sin tardanza se juntáron los Mexicanos, en gran copia, puestos á punto de Guerra, que no parecia, sino que habian salido debajo de tierra todos juntos, y comenzáron luego á dar grita y pelear, y los Españoles les comenzáron á responder de dentro con toda la artillería que de nuebo habian traido, y con toda la gente que de nuevo habia venido, y los Españoles hicféron gran destrozo en los Indios, con la artillería, arcabuzes, y ballestas y todo el otro artificio de pelear." (Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva España, MS., lib. 12, cap. 22.) The good father waxes eloquent in his description of the battle scene.

[3] The enemy presented so easy a mark, says Gomara, that the gunners loaded and fired with hardly the trouble of pointing their pieces. "Tan recio, que los artilleros sin asestar jugaban con los tiros." Crónica, cap. 106.

rallying, the bold barbarians uttered a piercing cry, and rushed forward over the prostrate bodies of their comrades. A second and a third volley checked their career, and threw them into disorder, but still they pressed on, letting off clouds of arrows; while their comrades on the roofs of the houses took more deliberate aim at the combatants in the courtyard. The Mexicans were particularly expert in the use of the sling;[4] and the stones which they hurled from their elevated positions on the heads of their enemies did even greater execution than the arrows. They glanced, indeed, from the mail-covered bodies of the cavaliers, and from those who were sheltered under the cotton panoply, or *escaupil*. But some of the soldiers, especially the veterans of Cortéz, and many of their Indian allies, had but slight defences, and suffered greatly under this stony tempest.

The Aztecs, meanwhile, had advanced close under the walls of the intrenchment; their ranks broken and disordered, and their limbs mangled by the unintermitting fire of the Christians. But they still pressed on, under the very muzzle of the guns. They endeavored to scale the parapet, which, from its moderate height, was in itself a work of no great difficulty. But the moment they showed their heads above the rampart, they were shot down by the unerring marksmen within, or stretched on the ground by a blow of a Tlascalan *maquahuitl*. Nothing daunted, others soon appeared to take the place of the fallen, and strove, by raising themselves on the writhing bodies of their dying comrades, or by fixing their spears in the crevices of the wall, to surmount the barrier. But the attempt proved equally vain.

Defeated here, they tried to effect a breach in the parapet by battering it with heavy pieces of timber. The works were not constructed on those scientific principles by which one part is made to overlook and protect another. The besiegers, therefore, might operate at their pleasure, with but little molestation from the garrison within, whose guns could not be brought into a position to bear on them, and who could mount no part of their own works for their defence, without exposing their persons to the missiles of the whole besieging army. The parapet, however, proved too strong for the efforts of the assailants. In their despair, they endeavored to set the Christian quarters on fire, shooting burning arrows into them, and climbing up so as to dart their firebrands through the embrasures. The principal edifice was of stone. But the temporary defences of the Indian allies, and other parts of the exterior works, were of wood.

[4] "Hondas, que eran la mas fuerte arma de pelea que los Mejicanos tenian." Camargo, Hist. de Tlascala, MS.

Several of these took fire, and the flame spread rapidly among the light, combustible materials. This was a disaster for which the besieged were wholly unprepared. They had little water, scarcely enough for their own consumption. They endeavored to extinguish the flames by heaping on earth. But in vain. Fortunately the great building was of materials which defied the destroying element. But the fire raged in some of the outworks, connected with the parapêt, with a fury which could only be checked by throwing down a part of the wall itself, thus laying open a formidable breach. This, by the general's order, was speedily protected by a battery of heavy guns, and a file of arquebusiers, who kept up an incessant volley through the opening on the assailants.[5]

The fight now raged with fury on both sides. The walls around the palace belched forth an unintermitting sheet of flame and smoke. The groans of the wounded and dying were lost in the fiercer battle-cries of the combatants, the roar of the artillery, the sharper rattle of the musketry, and the hissing sound of Indian missiles. It was the conflict of the European with the American; of civilized man with the barbarian; of the science of the one with the rude weapons and warfare of the other. And as the ancient walls of Tenochtitlan shook under the thunders of the artillery,—it announced that the white man, the destroyer, had set his foot within her precincts.[6]

Night at length came, and drew her friendly mantle over the contest. The Aztec seldom fought by night. It brought little repose, however, to the Spaniards, in hourly expectation of an assault; and they found abundant occupation in restoring the breaches in their defences, and in repairing their battered armor. The beleaguering host lay on their arms through the night, giving token of their presence, now and then, by sending a stone or shaft over the battlements, or by a solitary cry of defiance from some warrior more determined than the rest, till all other sounds were lost in the vague, indistinct murmurs which float upon the air in the neighborhood of a vast assembly.

The ferocity shown by the Mexicans seems to have been a

[5] "En la Fortaleza daban tan recio combate, que por muchas partes nos pusiéron fuego, y por la una se quemó mucha parte de ella, sin la poder remediar, hasta que la atajámos, cortando las paredes, y derrocando un pedazo que mató el fuego. E si no fuera por la mucha Guarda, que allí puse de Escopeteros, y Ballesteros, y otros tiros de pólvora, nos entraran á escala vista, sin los poder resistir." Rel. Seg. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 134.

[6] Ibid., ubi supra.—Gomara, Crónica, cap. 106.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 13.—Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva España, MS., lib. 12, cap. 22.—Gonzalo de las Casas, Defensa, MS., Parte 1, cap. 26.—Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 126.

thing for which Cortés was wholly unprepared. His past experience, his uninterrupted career of victory with a much feebler force at his command, had led him to underrate the military efficiency, if not the valor, of the Indians. The apparent facility, with which the Mexicans had acquiesced in the outrages on their sovereign and themselves, had led him to hold their courage, in particular, too lightly. He could not believe the present assault to be anything more than a temporary ebullition of the populace, which would soon waste itself by its own fury. And he proposed, on the following day, to sally out and inflict such chastisement on his foes as should bring them to their senses, and show who was master in the capital.

With early dawn, the Spaniards were up and under arms; but not before their enemies had given evidence of their hostility by the random missiles, which, from time to time, were sent into the inclosure. As the gray light of morning advanced, it showed the besieging army far from being diminished in numbers, filling up the great square and neighboring avenues in more dense array than on the preceding evening. Instead of a confused, disorderly rabble, it had the appearance of something like a regular force, with its battalions distributed under their respective banners, the devices of which showed a contribution from the principal cities and districts in the Valley. High above the rest was conspicuous the ancient standard of Mexico, with its well known cognizance, an eagle pouncing on an ocelot, emblazoned on a rich mantle of feather-work. Here and there priests might be seen mingling in the ranks of the besiegers, and, with frantic gestures, animating them to avenge their insulted deities.

The greater part of the enemy had little clothing save the *maxtlatl*, or sash round the loins. They were variously armed, with long spears tipped with copper, or flint, or sometimes merely pointed and hardened in the fire. Some were provided with slings, and others with darts having two or three points, with long strings attached to them, by which, when discharged, they could be torn away again from the body of the wounded. This was a formidable weapon, much dreaded by the Spaniards. Those of a higher order wielded the terrible *maquahuitl*, with its sharp and brittle blades of obsidian. Amidst the motley bands of warriors, were seen many whose showy dress and air of authority intimated persons of high military consequence. Their breasts were protected by plates of metal, over which was thrown the gay surcoat of feather-work. They wore casques resembling, in their form, the head of some wild and ferocious animal, crested with bristly hair, or overshadowed by

tall and graceful plumes of many a brilliant color. Some few were decorated with the red fillet bound round the hair, having tufts of cotton attached to it, which denoted by their number that of the victories they had won, and their own preëminent rank among the warriors of the nation. The motley assembly plainly showed that priest, warrior, and citizen had all united to swell the tumult.

Before the sun had shot his beams into the Castilian quarters, the enemy were in motion, evidently preparing to renew the assault of the preceding day. The Spanish commander determined to anticipate them by a vigorous sortie, for which he had had already made the necessary dispositions. A general discharge of ordnance and musketry sent death far and wide into the enemy's ranks, and, before they had time to recover from their confusion, the gates were thrown open, and Cortés, sallying out at the head of his cavalry, supported by a large body of infantry and several thousand Tlascalans, rode at full gallop against them. Taken thus by surprise, it was scarcely possible to offer much resistance. Those who did were trampled down under the horses' feet, cut to pieces with the broadswords, or pierced with the lances of the riders. The infantry followed up the blow, and the rout for the moment was general.

But the Aztecs fled only to take refuge behind a barricade, or strong work of timber and earth which had been thrown across the great street through which they were pursued. Rallying on the other side, they made a gallant stand, and poured in turn a volley of their light weapons on the Spaniards, who, saluted with a storm of missiles at the same time, from the terraces of the houses, were checked in their career, and thrown into some disorder.[7]

Cortés, thus impeded, ordered up a few pieces of heavy ordnance, which soon swept away the barricades, and cleared a passage for the army. But it had lost the momentum acquired in its rapid advance. The enemy had time to rally and to meet the Spaniards on more equal terms. They were attacked in flank too, as they advanced, by fresh battalions, who swarmed in from the adjoining streets and lanes. The canals were alive with boats filled with warriors, who, with their formidable darts searched every crevice or weak place in the armor of proof, and made havoc on the unprotected bodies of the Tlascalans. By repeated and vigorous charges, the Spaniards succeeded in driving the Indians before them ; though many, with a desperation which showed they loved vengeance better than life, sought

[7] Carta del Exército, MS.

to embarrass the movements of their horses by clinging to their legs, or, more successfully, strove to pull the riders from their saddles. And woe to the unfortunate cavalier who was thus dismounted,—to be despatched by the brutal *maquahuitl*, or to be dragged on board a canoe to the bloody altar of sacrifice!

But the greatest annoyance which the Spaniards endured was from the missiles from the *azoteas*, consisting often of large stones, hurled with a force that would tumble the stoutest rider from his saddle. Galled in the extreme by these discharges, against which even their shields afforded no adequate protection, Cortés ordered fire to be set to the buildings. This was no very difficult matter, since, although chiefly of stone, they were filled with mats, cane-work, and other combustible materials, which were soon in a blaze. But the buildings stood separated from one another by canals and drawbridges, so that the flames did not easily communicate to the neighboring edifices. Hence, the labor of the Spaniards was incalculably increased, and their progress in the work of destruction—fortunately for the city—was comparatively slow.[8] They did not relax their efforts, however, till several hundred houses had been consumed and the miseries of a conflagration, in which the wretched inmates perished equally with the defenders, were added to the other horrors of the scene.

The day was now far spent. The Spaniards had been everywhere victorious. But the enemy, though driven back on every point, still kept the field. When broken by the furious charges of the cavalry, he soon rallied behind the temporary defences, which, at different intervals, had been thrown across the streets and, facing about, renewed the fight with undiminished courage, till the sweeping away of the barriers by the cannon of the assailants left a free passage for the movements of their horse. Thus the action was a succession of rallying and retreating, in which both parties suffered much, although the loss inflicted on the Indians was probably tenfold greater than that of the Spaniards. But the Aztecs could better afford the loss of a hundred lives than their antagonists that of one. And, while the Spaniards showed an array broken, and obviously thinned in numbers the Mexican army, swelled by the tributary levies which flowed in upon it from the neighboring streets, exhibited, with all its

[8] "Están todas en el agua, y de casa á casa vna puente leuadiza, passalla á nado, era cosa muy peligrosa; porque desde las açuteas tirauan tanta piedra, y cantos, que era cosa perdida ponernos en ello. Y demas desto, en algunas casas que les poniamos fuego, tardaua vna casa é se quemar vn dia entero, y no se podia pegar fuego de vna casa á otra; lo vno, por estar apartadas la vna de otra el agua en medio; y lo otro, por ser de açuteas." Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 126.

losses, no sign of diminution. At length, sated with carnage, and exhausted by toil and hunger, the Spanish commander drew off his men, and sounded a retreat.[9]

On his way back to his quarters, he beheld his friend, the secretary Duero, in a street adjoining, unhorsed, and hotly engaged with a body of Mexicans, against whom he was desperately defending himself with his poniard. Cortés, roused at the sight, shouted his war-cry, and, dashing into the midst of the enemy, scattered them like chaff by the fury of his onset; then, recovering his friend's horse, he enabled him to remount, and the two cavaliers, striking their spurs into their steeds, burst through their opponents and joined the main body of the army.[10] Such displays of generous gallantry were not uncommon in these engagements, which called forth more feats of personal adventure than battles with antagonists better skilled in the science of war. The chivalrous bearing of the general was emulated in full measure by Sandoval, De Leon, Olid, Alvarado, Ordaz, and his other brave companions, who won such glory under the eye of their leader, as prepared the way for the independent commands which afterwards placed provinces and kingdom at their disposal.

The undaunted Aztecs hung on the rear of their retreating foes, annoying them at every step by fresh flights of stones and arrows; and when the Spaniards had reëntered their fortress, the Indian host encamped around it, showing the same dogged resolution as on the preceding evening. Though true to their ancient habits of inaction during the night, they broke the stillness of the hour by insulting cries and menaces, which reached the ears of the besieged. "The gods have delivered you at last, into our hands," they said; "Huitzilopotchli has long cried for his victims. The stone of sacrifice is ready. The knives are sharpened. The wild beasts in the palace are roaring for their offal. And the cages," they added, taunting the Tlascalans with their leanness, "are waiting for the false sons of Anahuac, who are to be fattened for the festival!" These dismal menaces, which sounded fear-

[9] "The Mexicans fought with such ferocity," says Diaz, "that, if we had had the assistance on that day of ten thousand Hectors, and as many Orlandos, we should have made no impression on them! There were several of our troops," he adds, "who had served in the Italian wars, but neither there nor in the battles with the Turk had they ever seen any thing like the desperation shown by these Indians." Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 126.

See, also, for the last pages, Rel. Seg. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 135. Ixtlilxochitl, Relaciones, MS.,—Probanza á pedimento de Juan de Lexalde, MS.,—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 13.—Gomara, Crônica cap. 196.

[10] Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap 9—Torquemada, Monarca Ind., lib. 4, cap. 69.

fully in the ears of the besieged, who understood too well their import, were mingled with piteous lamentations for their sovereign, whom they called on the Spaniards to deliver up to them.

Cortés suffered much from a severe wound which he had received in the hand in the late action. But the anguish of his mind must have been still greater, as he brooded over the dark prospect before him. He had mistaken the character of the Mexicans. Their long and patient endurance had been a violence to their natural temper, which, as their whole history proves, was arrogant and ferocious beyond that of most of the races of Anahuac. The restraint, which, in deference to their monarch, more than to their own fears, they had so long put on their natures, being once removed, their passions burst forth with accumulated violence. The Spaniards had encountered in the Tlascalan an open enemy, who had no grievance to complain of, no wrong to redress. He fought under the vague apprehension only of some coming evil to his country. But the Aztec, hitherto the proud lord of the land, was goaded by insult and injury, till he had reached that pitch of self-devotion, which made life cheap, in comparison with revenge. Armed thus with the energy of despair, the savage is almost a match for the civilized man; and a whole nation, moved to its depths by a common feeling, which swallows up all selfish considerations of personal interest and safety, becomes, whatever be its resources, like the earthquick and the tornado, the most formidable among the agencies of nature.

Considerations of this kind may have passed through the mind of Cortés, as he reflected on his own impotence to restrain the fury of the Mexicans, and resolved, in spite of his late supercilious treatment of Montezuma, to employ his authority to allay the tumult,—an authority so successfully exerted in behalf of Alvarado, at an earlier stage of the insurrection. He was the more confirmed in his purpose, on the following morning, when the assailants, redoubling their efforts, succeeded in scaling the works in one quarter, and effecting an entrance into the inclosure. It is true, they were met with so resolute a spirit, that not a man, of those who entered, was left alive. But, in the impetuosity of the assault, it seemed for a few moments, as if the place was to be carried by storm.[11]

Cortés now sent to the Aztec emperor to request his interposition with his subjects in behalf of the Spaniards. But Montezuma was not in the humor to comply. He had remained moodily in his quarters ever since the general's return. Dis-

[11] Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 126.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 13.—Gomara, Crónica, cap. 107.

gusted with the treatment he had received, he had still further cause for mortification in finding himself the ally of those who were the open enemies of his nation. From his apartment he had beheld the tragical scenes in his capital, and seen another, the presumptive heir to his throne, taking the place which he should have occupied at the head of his warriors, and fighting the battles of his country.[12] Distressed by his position, indignant at those who had placed him in it, he coldly answered, "What have I to do with Malinche? I do not wish to hear from him. I desire only to die. To what a state has my willingness to serve him reduced me![13] When urged still further to comply by Olid and father Olmedo, he added, "It is of no use. They will neither believe me, nor the false words and promises of Malinche. You will never leave these walls alive." On being assured, however, that the Spaniards would willingly depart, if a way were open to them by their enemies, he at length—moved, probably, more by the desire to spare the blood of his subjects, than of the Christians—consented to expostulate with his people.[14]

In order to give the greater effect to his presence, he put on his imperial robes. The *tilmatli*, his mantle of white and blue, flowed over his shoulders, held together by its rich clasp of the green *chalchivitl*. The same precious gem, with emeralds of uncommon size, set in gold, profusely ornamented other parts of his dress. His feet were shod with the golden sandals, and his brows covered by the *copilli*, or Mexican diadem, resembling in form the pontifical tiara. Thus attired and surrounded by a guard of Spaniards and several Aztec nobles, and preceded by the golden wand, the symbol of sovereignty, the Indian monarch ascended the central turret of the palace. His presence was instantly recognized by the people, and, as the royal retinue advanced along the battlements, a change, as is by magic, came over the scene. The clang of instruments, the fierce cries of the assailants, were hushed, and a deathlike stillness pervaded the whole assembly, so fiercely agitated, but a few moments before, by the wild tumult of war! Many prostrated themselves

[12] Cortés sent Marina to ascertain from Montezuma the name of the gallant chief, who could be easily seen from the walls animating and directing his countrymen. The Emperor informed him that it was his brother Cuitlahua, the presumptive heir to his crown, and the same chief whom the Spanish commander had released a few days previous. Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 10.

[13] "¿Que quiere de mí ya Malinche, que yo no deseo viuir ni oille? pues en tal estado por su causa mi ventura me ha traido." Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 126.

[14] Ibid., ubi supra.—Ixtlilxochitl, Hist. Chich., MS., cap. 88.

on the ground; others bent the knee; and all turned with eager expectation towards the monarch, whom they had been taught to reverence with slavish awe, and from whose countenance they had been wont to turn away as from the intolerable splendors of divinity! Montezuma saw his advantage; and, while he stood thus confronted with his awe-struck people, he seemed to recover all his former authority and confidence, as he felt himself to be still a king. With a calm voice, easily heard over the silent assembly, he is said by the Castilian writers to have thus addressed them.

"Why do I see my people here in arms against the palace of my fathers? Is it that you think your sovereign a prisoner, and wish to release him? If so, you have acted rightly. But you are mistaken. I am no prisoner. The strangers are my guests. I remain with them only from choice, and can leave them when I list. Have you come to drive them from the city? That is unnecessary. They will depart of their own accord, if you will open a way for them. Return to your homes, then. Lay down your arms. Show your obedience to me who have a right to it. The white men shall go back to their own land; and all shall be well again within the walls of Tenochtitlan."

As Montezuma announced himself the friend of the detested strangers, a murmur ran through the multitude; a murmur of contempt for the pusillanimous prince who could show himself so insensible to the insults and injuries for which the nation was in arms! The swollen tide of their passions swept away all the barriers of ancient reverence, and, taking a new direction, descended on the head of the unfortunate monarch, so far degenerated from his warlike ancestors. "Base Aztec," they exclaimed, "woman, coward, the white men have made you a woman,—fit only to weave and spin!" These bitter taunts were soon followed by still more hostile demonstrations. A chief, it is said, of high rank, bent a bow or brandished a javelin with an air of defiance against the emperor,[15] when, in an instant, a cloud of stones and arrows descended on the spot where the royal train was gathered. The Spaniards appointed to protect his person had been thrown off their guard by the respectful deportment of the people during their lord's address. They now hastily interposed their bucklers. But it was too late. Montezuma was wounded by three of the missiles, one of which, a stone, fell with such violence on his head, near the temple, as brought him senseless to the ground. The Mexicans, shocked

[15] Acosta reports a tradition, that Gautemozin, Montezuma's nephew, who himself afterwards succeeded to the throne, was the man that shot the first arrow. Lib. 7, cap. 26.

at their own sacrilegious act, experienced a sudden revulsion of feeling, and, setting up a dismal cry, dispersed panic-struck, in different directions. Not one of the multitudinous array remained in the great square before the palace!

The unhappy prince, meanwhile was borne by his attendants to his apartments below. On recovering from the insensibility caused by the blow, the wretchedness of his condition broke upon him. He had tasted the last bitterness of degradation. He had been reviled, rejected, by his people. The meanest of the rabble had raised their hands against him. He had nothing more to live for. It was in vain that Cortés and his officers endeavored to soothe the anguish of his spirit and fill him with better thoughts. He spoke not a word in answer. His wound, though dangerous, might still, with skilful treatment, not prove mortal. But Montezuma refused all the remedies prescribed for it. He tore off the bandages as often as they were applied, maintaining, all the while, the most determined silence. He sat with eyes dejected, brooding over his fallen fortunes, over the image of ancient majesty, and present humiliation. He had survived his honor. But a spark of his ancient spirit seemed to kindle in his bosom, as it was clear he did not mean to survive his disgrace.—From this painful scene the Spanish general and his followers were soon called away by the new dangers which menaced the garrison.[16]

[16] I have reported this tragical event, and the circumstances attending it, as they are given, in more or less detail, but substantially in the same way, by the most accredited writers of that and the following age,—several of them eye-witnesses. (See Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 126.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33. cap. 47.—Rel. Seg. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 136.—Camargo, Hist. de Tlascala, MS.—Ixtlilxochitl, Hist. Chich., MS., cap. 88.—Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 10.—Torquemada, Monarch. Ind., lib. 4, cap. 70.—Acosta, ubi supra.—Martyr, De Orbe Novo, dec. 5. cap, 5.) It is also confirmed by Cortés in the instrument granting to Montezuma's favorite daughter certain estates by way of dowry. (See *Appendix*, *Part* 2, *No.* 12.) Don Thoan Cano, indeed, who married this princess, assured Oviedo that the Mexicans respected the person of the monarch so long as they saw him, and were not aware, when they discharged their missiles, that he was present, being hid from sight by the shields of the Spaniards. (See *Appendix*, *Part* 2, *No.* 11.) This improbable statement is repeated by the chaplain Gomara. (Crónica, cap. 107.) It is rejected by Oviedo, however, who says, that Alvarado, himself present at the scene, in a conversation with him afterwards, explicitly confirmed the narrative given in the text. (Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 47.) The Mexicans gave a very different account of the transaction. According to them, Montezuma, together with the lords of Tezcuco and Tlatelolco, then detained as prisoners in the fortress by the Spaniards, were all strangled by means of the *garrotte*, and their dead bodies thrown over the walls to their countrymen. I quote the original of father Sahagun, who gathered the story from the Aztecs themselves.

"De esta manera se determináron los Españoles á morir ó vencer varonilmente ; y así habláron á todos los amigos Indios, y todos ellos estuviéron firmes en esta determinacion ; y lo primero que hiciéron fué que diéron garrote á todos los Señores que tenian presos, y los echáron muertos fuera del fuerte : y antes que esto hiciesen les dijéron muchas cosas, y les hiciéron saber su determinacion, y que de ellos habia de comenzar esta obra, y luego todos los demas habian de ser muertos á sus manos, dijéronles, no es posible que vuestros Idolos os libren de nuestras manos. Y desque les hubiéron dado Garrote, y viéron que estaban muertos, mandáronlos echar por las azoteas, fuera de la casa, en un lugar que se llama Tortuga de Piedra, porque allí estaba una piedra labrada á manera de Tortuga. Y desque supiéron y viéron los de á fuera, que aquellos Señores tan principales habian sido muertos por las manos de los Españoles, luego tomáron los cuerpos, y les hiciéron sus exequias, al modo de su Idolatria, y quemáron sus cuerpos, y tomáron sus cenizas, y las pusiéron en lugares apropiadas á sus dignidades y valor." Hist. de Nueva España, MS., lib. 12, cap. 23.

It is hardly necessary to comment on the absurdity of this monstrous imputation, which, however, has found favor with some later writers. Independently of all other considerations, the Spaniards would have been slow to compass the Indian monarch's death, since, as the Tezcucan Ixtlilxochitl truly observes, it was the most fatal blow which could befall them, by dissolving the last tie which held them to the Mexicans. Hist. Chich., MS., ubi supra.

CHAPTER II.

STORMING OF THE GREAT TEMPLE.—SPIRIT OF THE AZTECS.—DISTRESSES OF THE GARRISON.—SHARP COMBATS IN THE CITY.—DEATH OF MONTEZUMA.

1520.

OPPOSITE to the Spanish quarters, at only a few rods' distance, stood the great *teocalli* of Huitzilopotchli. This pyramidal mound, with the sanctuaries that crowned it, rising altogether to the height of near a hundred and fifty feet, afforded an elevated position that completely commanded the palace of Axayacatl, occupied by the Christians. A body of five or six hundred Mexicans, many of them nobles and warriors of the highest rank, had got possession of the *teocalli*, whence they discharged such a tempest of arrows on the garrison, that no one could leave his defences for a moment without imminent danger; while the Mexicans, under shelter of the sanctuaries, were entirely covered from the fire of the besieged. It was obviously necessary to dislodge the enemy, if the Spaniards would remain longer in their quarters.

Cortés assigned this service to his chamberlain, Escobar, giving him a hundred men for the purpose, with orders to storm the *teocalli*, and set fire to the sanctuaries. But that officer was thrice repulsed in the attempt, and, after the most desperate efforts, was obliged to return with considerable loss, and without accomplishing his object.

Cortés, who saw the immediate necessity of carrying the place, determined to lead the storming party himself. He was then suffering much from the wound in his left hand, which had disabled it for the present. He made the arm serviceable, however, by fastening his buckler to it,[1] and, thus crippled, sallied out at the head of three hundred chosen cavaliers, and several thousand of his auxiliaries.

[1] "Salí fuera de la Fortaleza, aunque manco de la mano izquierda de una herida que el primer dia me habian dado: y liada la rodela en el brazo fuý á la Torre con algunos Españoles, que me siguiéron." Rel. Seg. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 138.

In the court-yard of the temple he found a numerous body of Indians prepared to dispute his passage. He briskly charged them, but the flat, smooth stones of the pavement were so slippery, that the horses lost their footing, and many of them fell. Hastily dismounting, they sent back the animals to their quarters, and, renewing the assault, the Spaniards succeeded without much difficulty in dispersing the Indian warriors, and opening a free passage for themselves to the *teocalli*. This building, as the reader may remember, was a huge pyramidal structure, about three hundred feet square at the base. A flight of stone steps on the outside, at one of the angles of the mound, led to a platform, or terraced walk, which passed round the building until it reached a similar flight of stairs directly over the preceding, that conducted to another landing as before. As there were five bodies or divisions of the *teocalli*, it became necessary to pass round its whole extent four times, or nearly a mile, in order to reach the summit, which, it may be recollected, was an open area, crowned only by the two sanctuaries dedicated to the Aztec deities.[2]

Cortés, having cleared a way for the assault, sprang up the lower stairway, followed by Alvarado, Sandoval, Ordaz, and the other gallant cavaliers of his little band, leaving a file of arquebusiers and a strong corps of Indian allies to hold the enemy in check at the foot of the monument. On the first landing, as well as on the several galleries above, and on the summit, the Aztec warriors were drawn up to dispute his passage. From their elevated position they showered down volleys of lighter missiles, together with heavy stones, beams, and burning rafters, which, thundering along the stairway, overturned the ascending Spaniards, and carried desolation through their ranks. The more fortunate, eluding or springing over these obstacles, succeeded in gaining the first terrace; where, throwing themselves on their enemies, they compelled them, after a short resistance, to fall back. The assailants pressed on, effectually supported by a brisk fire of the musketeers from below, which so much galled the Mexicans in their exposed situation, that they were glad to take shelter on the broad summit of the *teocalli*.

Cortés and his comrades were close upon their rear, and the two parties soon found themselves face to face on this aërial battle-field, engaged in mortal combat in presence of the whole

[2] See Ante, pp. 145–142.

I have ventured to repeat the description of the temple here, as it is important that the reader, who may perhaps not turn to the preceding pages, should have a distinct image of it in his own mind, before beginning the combat.

city, as well as of the troops in the courtyard, who paused, as if by mutual consent, from their own hostilities, gazing in silent expectation on the issue of those above. The area, though somewhat smaller than the base of the *teocalli*, was large enough to afford a fair field of fight for a thousand combatants. It was paved with broad, flat stones. No impediment occurred over its surface, except the huge sacrificial block, and the temples of stone which rose to the height of forty feet, at the further extremity of the arena. One of these had been consecrated to the Cross. The other was still occupied by the Mexican war-god. The Christian and the Aztec contended for their religions under the very shadow of their respective shrines; while the Indian priests, running to and fro, with their hair wildly streaming over their sable mantles, seemed hovering in mid air, like so many demons of darkness urging on the work of slaughter!

The parties closed with the desperate fury of men who had no hope but in victory. Quarter was neither asked nor given; and to fly was impossible. The edge of the area was unprotected by parapet or battlement. The least slip would be fatal; and the combatants, as they struggled in mortal agony, were sometimes seen to roll over the sheer sides of the precipice together.[3] Cortés himself is said to have had a narrow escape from this dreadful fate. Two warriors, of strong, muscular frames, seized on him, and were dragging him violently towards the brink of the pyramid. Aware of their intention, he struggled with all his force, and, before they could accomplish their purpose, succeeded in tearing himself from their grasp, and hurling one of them over the walls with his own arm! The story is not improbable in itself, for Cortés was a man of uncommon agility and strength. It has been often repeated; but not by contemporary history.[4]

[3] Many of the Aztecs, according to Sahagun, seeing the fate of such of their comrades as fell into the hands of the Spaniards, on the narrow terraces below, voluntarily threw themselves headlong from the lofty summit and were dashed in pieces on the pavement. "Y los de arriba viendo á los de abajo muertos, y á los de arriba que los iban matando los que habian subido, comenzáron á arrojarse del cu abajo, desde lo alto, los cuales todos morian despeñados, quebrados brazos y piernas, y hechos pedazos, porque el cu era muy alto; y otros los mesmos Españoles los arrojaban de lo alto del cu, y así todos cuantos allá habian subido de los Mexicanos, muriéron mala muerte." Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva España, MS., lib. 12, cap. 22.

[4] Among others, see Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 9,—Torquemada, Monarch. Ind., lib. 4, cap. 69,—and Solís, very circumstantially, as usual, Conquista, lib. 4, cap. 16.

The first of these authors had access to some contemporary sources, the chronicle of the old soldier, Ojeda, for example, not now to be met with. It is strange, that so valiant an exploit should not have been communicated by Cortés himself, who cannot be accused of diffidence in such matters.

The battle lasted with unintermitting fury for three hours. The number of the enemy was double that of the Christians; and it seemed as if it were a contest which must be determined by numbers and brute force, rather than by superior science. But it was not so. The invulnerable armor of the Spaniard, his sword of matchless temper, and his skill in the use of it, gave him advantages which far outweighed the odds of physical strength and numbers. After doing all that the courage of despair could enable men to do, resistance grew fainter and fainter on the side of the Aztecs. One after another they had fallen. Two or three priests only survived to be led away in triumph by the victors. Every other combatant was stretched a corpse on the bloody arena, or had been hurled from the giddy heights. Yet the loss of the Spaniards was not inconsiderable. It amounted to forty-five of their best men, and nearly all the remainder were more or less injured in the desperate conflict.[5]

The victorious cavaliers now rushed towards the sanctuaries. The lower story was of stone; the two upper were of wood. Penetrating into their recesses, they had the mortification to find the image of the Virgin and the Cross removed.[6] But in the other edifice they still beheld the grim figure of Huitzilopotchli, with his censer of smoking-hearts, and the walls of his oratory reeking with gore,—not improbably of their own countrymen! With shouts of triumph the Christians tore the uncouth monster from his niche, and tumbled him, in the presence of the horror-struck Aztecs, down the steps of the *teocalli*. They then set fire to the accursed building. The flames speedily ran up the slender towers, sending forth an ominous light over city, lake, and valley, to the remotest hut among the mountains. It was the funeral pyre of Paganism and proclaimed the fall of that

[5] Captain Diaz, a little loth sometimes, is emphatic in his encomiums on the valor shown by his commander on this occasion. "Aquí se mostró Cortés mui varõ, como siẽpre lo fué. O que pelear, y fuerte batalla q̃ aquí tuuímos! era cosa de notar vernos á todos corriendo sangre, y llenos de heridas, é mas de quarenta soldados muertos." (Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 126.) The pens of the old chroniclers keep pace with their swords in the display of this brilliant exploit;—"colla penna e colla spada," equally fortunate. See Rel. Seg. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p, 138.—Gomara, Crónica, cap. 106.—Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva España, MS., lib. 12, cap. 22.—Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 9.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 13.—Torquemada, Monarch. Ind., lib. 4, cap. 69.

[6] Archbishop Lorenzana is of opinion that this image of the Virgin is the same now seen in the church of *Nuestra Señora de los Remedios!* (Rel. Seg. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 138, nota.) In what way the Virgin survived the sack of the city, and was brought to light again, he does not inform us. But the more difficult to explain, the more undoubted the miracle.

sanguinary religion which had so long hung like a dark cloud over the fair regions of Anahuac![7]

Having accomplished this good work, the Spaniards descended the winding slopes of the *teocalli* with more free and buoyant step, as if conscious that the blessing of Heaven now rested on their arms. They passed through the dusky files of Indian warriors in the courtyard, too much dismayed by the appalling scenes they had witnessed to offer resistance; and reached their own quarters in safety. That very night they followed up the blow by a sortie on the sleeping town, and burned three hundred houses, the horrors of conflagration being made still more impressive by occurring at the hour when the Aztecs, from their own system of warfare, were least prepared for them.[8]

Hoping to find the temper of the natives somewhat subdued by these reverses, Cortés now determined, with his usual policy, to make them a vantage-ground for proposing terms of accommodation. He accordingly invited the enemy to a parley, and, as the principal chiefs, attended by their followers, assembled in the great square, he mounted the turret before occupied by Montezuma, and made signs that he would address them. Marina, as usual, took her place by his side, as his interpreter. The multitude gazed with earnest curiosity on the Indian girl, whose influence with the Spaniards was well known, and whose connection with the general, in particular, had led the Aztecs to designate him by her Mexican name of Malinche.[9] Cortés, speaking through the soft, musical tones of his mistress, told his audience

[7] No achievement in the war struck more awe into the Mexicans, than this storming of the great temple, in which the white men seemed to bid defiance equally to the powers of God and man. Hieroglyphical paintings minutely commemorating it were to be frequently found among the natives after the Conquest. The sensitive Captain Diaz intimates that those which he saw made full as much account of the wounds and losses of the Christians as the facts would warrant. (Ibid., ubi supra.) It was the only way in which the conquered could take their revenge.

[8] "Sequenti nocte, nostri erumpentes in vna viarum arci vicina, domos combussêre tercentum : in altera plerasque e quibus arci molestia fiebat. Ita nunc trucidando, nunc diruendo, et interdum vulnera recipiendo, in pontibus et in viis, diebus noctibusque multis laboratum est utrinque." (Martyr, De Orbe Novo, dec. 5, cap. 6.) In the number of actions and their general result, namely, the victories, barren victories, of the Christians, all writers, are agreed. But as to time, place, circumstance, or order, no two hold together. How shall the historian of the present day make a harmonious tissue out of these motley and many-colored threads?

[9] It is the name by which she is still celebrated in the popular minstrelsy of Mexico. Was the famous Tlascalan mountain, *sierra de Malinche*,—anciently "Mattalcueye,"—named in compliment to the Indian damsel? At all events, it was an honor well merited from her adopted countrymen.

they must now be convinced, that they had nothing further to hope from opposition to the Spaniards. They had seen their gods trampled in the dust, their altars broken, their dwellings burned, their warriors falling on all sides. "All this," continued he, "you have brought on yourselves by your rebellion. Yet for the affection the sovereign, whom you have so unworthily treated, still bears you, I would willingly stay my hand, if you will lay down your arms, and return once more to your obedience. But, if you do not," he concluded, "I will make your city a heap of ruins, and leave not a soul alive to mourn over it!"

But the Spanish commander did not yet comprehend the character of the Aztecs, if he thought to intimidate them by menaces. Calm in their exterior and slow to move, they were the more difficult to pacify when roused; and now that they had been stirred to their inmost depths, it was no human voice that could still the tempest. It may be, however, that Cortés did not so much misconceive the character of the people. He may have felt that an authoritative tone was the only one he could assume with any chance of effect, in his present position, in which milder and more conciliatory language would, by intimating a consciousness of inferiority, have too certainly defeated its own object.

It was true, they answered, he had destroyed their temples, broken in pieces their gods, massacred their countrymen. Many more, doubtless, were yet to fall under their terrible swords. But they were content so long as for every thousand Mexicans they could shed the blood of a single white man![10] "Look out," they continued, "on our terraces and streets, see them still thronged with warriors as far as your eyes can reach. Our numbers are scarcely diminished by our losses. Yours, on the contrary, are lessening every hour. You are perishing from hunger and sickness. Your provisions and water are failing. You must soon fall into our hands. *The bridges are broken down, and you cannot escape!*[11] There will be too few of you left to glut the vengeance of our Gods!" As they concluded, they sent a volley of arrows over the battlements, which compelled the Spaniards to descend and take refuge in their defences.

The fierce and indomitable spirit of the Aztecs filled the

[10] According to Cortés, they boasted, in somewhat loftier strain, they could spare twenty-five thousand for one, "á morir veinte y cinco mil de ellos, y uno de los nuestros.' Rel. Seg. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 139.

[11] "Que todas las calzadas de las entradas de la ciudad eran deshechas, como de hecho passaba." Ibid., loc. cit.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 13.

besieged with dismay. All, then, that they had done and suffered, their battles by day, their vigils by night, the perils they had braved, even the victories they had won, were of no avail. It was too evident that they had no longer the spring of ancient superstition to work upon, in the breasts of the natives, who, like some wild beast that has burst the bonds of his keeper, seemed now to swell and exult in the full consciousness of their strength. The annunciation respecting the bridges fell like a knell on the ears of the Christians. All that they had heard was too true,—and they gazed on one another with looks of anxiety and dismay.

The same consequences followed, which sometimes take place among the crew of a shipwrecked vessel. Subordination was lost in the dreadful sense of danger. A spirit of mutiny broke out, especially among the recent levies drawn from the army of Narvaez. They had come into the country from no motive of ambition, but attracted simply by the glowing reports of its opulence, and they had fondly hoped to return in a few months with their pockets well lined with the gold of the Aztec monarch. But how different had been their lot! From the first hour of their landing, they had experienced only trouble and disaster, privations of every description, sufferings unexampled, and they now beheld in perspective a fate yet more appalling. Bitterly did they lament the hour when they left the sunny fields of Cuba for these cannibal regions! And heartily did they curse their own folly in listening to the call of Velasquez, and still more, in embarking under the banner of Cortés![12]

They now demanded with noisy vehemence to be led instantly from the city, and refused to serve longer in defence of a place where they were cooped up like sheep in the shambles, waiting only to be dragged to slaughter. In all this they were rebuked by the more orderly, soldierlike conduct of the veterans of Cortés. These latter had shared with their general the day of his prosperity, and they were not disposed to desert him in the tempest. It was, indeed, obvious, on a little reflection, that the only chance of safety, in the existing crisis, rested on subordination and union; and that even this chance must be greatly diminished under any other leader than their present one.

Thus pressed by enemies without and by factions within, that leader was found, as usual, true to himself. Circumstances

[12] "Pues tambien quiero dezir las maldiciones que los de Narvaez echauan á Cortés, y las palabras que dezian, que renegauan dél, y de la tierra, y aun de Diego Velasquez, queacá les embió, que bien pacíficos estauan en sus casas en la Isla de Cuba, y estavan embelesados, y sin sentido." Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, ubi supra.

so appalling, as would have paralyzed a common mind, only stimulated his to higher action, and drew forth all its resources. He combined what is most rare, singular coolness and constancy of purpose, with a spirit of enterprise that might well be called romantic. His presence of mind did not now desert him. He calmly surveyed his condition, and weighed the difficulties which surrounded him, before coming to a decision. Independently of the hazard of a retreat in the face of a watchful and desperate foe, it was a deep mortification to surrender up the city, where he had so long lorded it as a master; to abandon the rich treasures which he had secured to himself and his followers; to forego the very means by which he had hoped to propitiate the favor of his sovereign, and secure an amnesty for his irregular proceedings. This, he well knew, must, after all, be dependent on success. To fly now was to acknowledge himself further removed from the conquest than ever. What a close was this to a career so auspiciously begun! What a contrast to his magnificent vaunts! What a triumph would it afford to his enemies! The governor of Cuba would be amply revenged.

But, if such humiliating reflections crowded on his mind, the alternative of remaining, in his present crippled condition, seemed yet more desperate.[13] With his men daily diminishing in strength and numbers, their provisions reduced so low that a small daily ration of bread was all the sustenance afforded to the soldier under his extraordinary fatigues,[14] with the breaches every day widening in his feeble fortifications, with his ammunition, in fine, nearly expended, it would be impossible to maintain the place much longer—and none but men of iron constitutions and tempers, like the Spaniards, could have held it out so long—against the enemy. The chief embarrassment was as to the time and manner in which it would be expedient to evacuate the city. The best route seemed to be that of Tlacopan (Tacuba). For the causeway, the most dangerous part of the road, was but two miles long in that direction and would, therefore, place the fugitives, much sooner than either of the other great avenues, on terra firma. Before his final departure, however, he proposed to make another sally in that direction, in order to reconnoitre the ground, and, at the same

[13] Notwithstanding this, in the petition or letter from Vera Cruz, addressed by the army to the Emperor Charles V., after the Conquest, the importunity of the soldiers is expressly stated as the principal motive that finally induced their general to abandon the city. Carta del Exército, MS.

[14] "La hambre era tanta, que á los Indios no se daba mas de *vna Tortilla de vacion, i a los Castellanos cinquenta granos de Maiz.*" Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2. lib. 10, cap. 9.

time, divert the enemy's attention from his real purpose by a show of active operations.

For some days his workmen had been employed in constructing a military machine of his own invention. It was called a *manta*, and was contrived somewhat on the principle of the mantelets used in the wars of the Middle Ages. It was, however, more complicated, consisting of a tower made of light beams and planks, having two chambers, one over the other. These were to be filled with musketeers, and the sides were provided with loop-holes, through which a fire could be kept up on the enemy. The great advantage proposed by this contrivance was, to afford a defence to the troops against the missiles hurled from the terraces. These machines, three of which were made, rested on rollers, and were provided with strong ropes, by which they were to be dragged along the streets by the Tlascalan auxiliaries.[15]

The Mexicans gazed with astonishment on this warlike machinery, and, as the rolling fortresses advanced, belching forth fire and smoke from their entrails, the enemy, incapable of making an impression on those within, fell back in dismay. By bringing the *mantas* under the walls of the houses, the Spaniards were enabled to fire with effect on the mischievous tenants of the *azoteas*, and when this did not silence them, by letting a ladder, or light drawbridge, fall on the roof from the top of the *manta*, they opened a passage to the terrace, and closed with the combatants hand to hand. They could not, however, thus approach the higher buildings, from which the Indian warriors threw down such heavy masses of stone and timber as dislodged the planks that covered the machines, or, thundering against their sides, shook the frail edifices to their foundations, threatening all within with indiscriminate ruin. Indeed, the success of the experiment was doubtful, when the intervention of a canal put a stop to their further progress.

The Spaniards now found the assertion of their enemies too

[15] Rel. Seg. de Cortéz, ap. Lorenzana, p. 135.—Gomara, Crónica, cap. 106.

Dr. Bird, in his picturesque romance of "Calavar," has made good use of these *mantas*, better, indeed, than can be permitted to the historian. He claims the privilege of the romancer; though it must be owned he does not abuse this privilege, for he has studied with great care the costume, manners, and military usages of the natives. He has done for them what Cooper has done for the wild tribes of the North,—touched their rude features with the bright coloring of a poetic fancy. He has been equally fortunate in his delineation of the picturesque scenery of the land. If he has been less so in attempting to revive the antique dialogue of the Spanish cavalier, we must not be surprised. Nothing is more difficult than the skilful execution of a modern antique. It requires all the genius and learning of Scott to execute it so that the connoisseur shall not detect the counterfeit.

well confirmed. The bridge which traversed the opening had been demolished; and, although the canals which intersected the city were, in general, of no great width or depth, the removal of the bridges not only impeded the movements of the general's clumsy machines, but effectually disconcerted those of his cavalry. Resolving to abandon the *mantas*, he gave orders to fill up the chasm with stone, timber, and other rubbish drawn from the ruined buildings, and to make a new passage-way for the army. While this labor was going on, the Aztec slingers and archers on the other side of the opening kept up a galling discharge on the Christians, the more defenceless from the nature of their occupation. When the work was completed, and a safe passage secured, the Spanish cavaliers rode briskly against the enemy, who, unable to resist the shock of the steel-clad column, fell back with precipitation to where another canal afforded a similar strong position for defence.[16]

There were no less than seven of these canals, intersecting the great street of Tlacopan,[17] and at every one the same scene was renewed, the Mexicans making a gallant stand, and inflicting some loss, at each, on their persevering antagonists. These operations consumed two days, when, after incredible toil, the Spanish general had the satisfaction to find the line of communication completely reëstablished through the whole length of the avenue, and the principal bridges placed under strong detachments of infantry. At this juncture, when he had driven the foe before him to the furthest extremity of the street, where it touches on the causeway, he was informed, that the Mexicans, disheartened by their reverses, desired to open a parley with him respecting the terms of an accommodation, and that their chiefs awaited his return for that purpose at the fortress. Overjoyed at the intelligence, he instantly rode back, attended by Alvarado, Sandoval, and about sixty of the cavaliers, to his quarters.

The Mexicans proposed that he should release the two priests captured in the temple, who might be the bearers of his terms, and serve as agents for conducting the negotiation. They were accordingly sent with the requisite instructions to their countrymen. But they did not return. The whole was an artifice of the enemy, anxious to procure the liberation of their religious

[16] Carta del Exército, MS.—Rel. Seg. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 140.—Gomara, Crónica, cap. 109.

[17] Clavigero is mistaken in calling this the street of Iztapalapan. (Stor. del Messico, tom. III., p. 129.) It was not the street by which the Spaniards entered, but by which they finally left the city, and is correctly indicated by Lorenzana, as that of Tlacopan,—or rather, Tacuba, into which the Spaniards corrupted the name. See p. 140, note.

leaders, one of whom was their *teoteuctli*, or high-priest, whose presence was indispensable in the probable event of a new coronation.

Cortés, meanwhile, relying on the prospects of a speedy arrangement, was hastily taking some refreshment with his officers after the fatigues of the day; when he received the alarming tidings, that the enemy were in arms again, with more fury than ever; that they had overpowered the detachments posted under Alvarado at three of the bridges, and were busily occupied in demolishing them. Stung with shame at the facility with which he had been duped by his wily foe, or rather by his own sanguine hopes, Cortés threw himself into the saddle, and, followed by his brave companions, galloped back at full speed to the scene of action. The Mexicans recoiled before the impetuous charge of the Spaniards. The bridges were again restored; and Cortés and his chivalry rode down the whole extent of the great street, driving the enemy, like frightened deer, at the points of their lances. But, before he could return on his steps, he had the mortification to find that the indefatigable foe, gathering from the adjoining lanes and streets, had again closed on his infantry, who, worn down by fatigue, were unable to maintain their position at one of the principal bridges. New swarms of warriors now poured in on all sides, overwhelming the little band of Christian cavaliers with a storm of stones, darts, and arrows, which rattled like hail on their armor and on that of their well-barbed horses. Most of the missiles, indeed, glanced harmless from the good panoplies of steel, or thick quilted cotton, but, now and then, one better aimed penetrated the joints of the harness, and stretched the rider on the ground.

The confusion became greater around the broken bridge. Some of the horsemen were thrown into the canal, and their steeds floundered wildly about without a rider. Cortes himself, at this crisis, did more than any other to cover the retreat of his followers. While the bridge was repairing, he plunged boldly into the midst of the barbarians, striking down an enemy at every vault of his charger, cheering on his own men, and spreading terror through the ranks of his opponents by the well-known sound of his battle-cry. Never did he display greater hardihood, or more freely expose his person, emulating, says an old chronicler, the feats of the Roman Cocles.[18] In this way he

[18] It is Oviedo who finds a parallel for his hero in the Roman warrior; the same, to quote the spirit-stirring legend of Macaulay,

"who kept the bridge so well
In the brave days of old."

"Mui digno es Cortés que se compare este fecho suyo desta jornada al de

stayed the tide of assailants, till the last man had crossed the bridge, when, some of the planks having given way, he was compelled to leap a chasm of full six feet in width, amidst a cloud of missiles, before he could place himself in safety.[19] A report ran through the army that the general was slain. It soon spread through the city, to the great joy of the Mexicans, and reached the fortress, where the besieged were thrown into no less consternation. But, happily for them, it was false. He, indeed, received two severe contusions on the knee, but in other respects remained uninjured. At no time, however, had he been in such extreme danger; and his escape, and that of his companions, were esteemed little less than a miracle. More than one grave historian refers the preservation of the Spaniards to the watchful care of their patron Apostle, St. James, who, in these desperate conflicts, was beheld careering on his milk-white steed at the head of the Christian squadrons, with his sword flashing lightning, while a lady robed in white—supposed to be the Virgin—was distinctly seen by his side, throwing dust in the eyes of the infidel! The fact is attested both by Spaniards and Mexicans,—by the latter after their conversion to Christianity. Surely, never was there a time when the interposition of their tutelar saint was more strongly demanded.[20]

Oracio Cocles, que se tocó de suso, porque con su esfuerzo, é lanza sola diô tanto lugar, que los caballos pudieran pasar, é hizo desembarazar la puente é pasá, á pasar de los Enemigos, aunque con harto trabajo." Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 13.

[19] It was a fair leap, for a knight and horse in armor. But the general's own assertion to the Emperor (Rel. Seg., ap. Lorenzana, p. 142) is fully confirmed by Oviedo, who tells us he had it from several who were present. "Y segun lo que yo he entendido de algunos que presentes se halláron, demas de la resistencia de aquellos havia de la vna parte á la otra casi vn estado de saltar con el caballo sin le faltar muchas pedradas de diversas partes, é manos, é por ir él, é su caballo bion armados no los hiriéron; pero no dexó de quedar atormentado de los golpes que le diéron." Hist. de las Ind., MS., ubi supra.

[20] Truly, "dignus vindice nodus"! The intervention of the celestial chivalry on these occasions is testified in the most unqualified manner by many respectable authorities. It is edifying to observe the combat going on in Oviedo's mind between the dictates of strong sense and superior learning, and those of the superstition of the age. It was an unequal combat, with odds sorely against the former, in the sixteenth century. I quote the passage as characteristic of the times. "Afirman que se vido el Apóstol Santiago á caballo peleando sobre vn caballo blanco en favor de los Christianos; é decian los Indios que el caballo con los pies y manos é con la boca mataba muchos dellos, de forma, que en poco discurso de tiempo no pareció Indio, é reposáron los Christianos lo restante de aquel dia. Ya sé que los incrédulos ó poco devotos dirán, que mi ocupacion en esto destos miragloa, pues no los ví, es superflua, ó perder tiempo novelando, y yo hablo, que esto é mas se puede creer; pues que los gentiles é sin fé, é Idólatras escriben, que ovo grandes misterios é miraglos en sus tiempos, é aquellos sabemosque eran

The coming of night dispersed the Indian battalions, which, vanishing like birds of ill omen from the field, left the well-contested pass in possession of the Spaniards. They returned, however, with none of the joyous feelings of conquerors to their citadel, but with slow step and dispirited, with weapons hacked, armor battered, and fainting under the loss of blood, fasting, and fatigue. In this condition they had yet to learn the tidings of a fresh misfortune in the death of Montezuma.[21]

The Indian monarch had rapidly declined, since he had received his injury, sinking, however, quite as much under the anguish of a wounded spirit, as under disease. He continued in the same moody state of insensibility as that already described; holding little communication with those around him, deaf to consolation, obstinately rejecting all medical remedies as well as nourishment. Perceiving his end approach, some of the cavaliers present in the fortress, whom the kindness of his manners had personally attached to him, were anxious to save the soul of the dying prince from the sad doom of those who perish in the darkness of unbelief. They accordingly waited on him, with father Olmedo at their head, and in the most earnest manner implored him to open his eyes to the error of his creed, and consent to be baptized. But Montezuma—whatever may have been suggested to the contrary—seems never to have faltered in his hereditary faith, or to have contemplated becoming an apostate; for surely he merits that name in its most odious application, who, whether Christian or Pagan, renounces his religion without conviction of its falsehood.[22] Indeed, it was a too implicit reliance on its oracles, which had led him to give such easy confi-

causados é fechos por el Diablo, pues mas fácil cosa es á dios é á la inmaculata Vírgen Nuestra Señora é al glorioso Apóstol Santiago, é á los santos é amigos de Jesu Christo hacer esos miraglos, que de suso estan dichos, é otros maiores." Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 47.

[21] "Multi restiterunt lapidibus et iaculis confossi, fuit et Cortesius, grauitér percussus, pauci evaserunt incolumes, et hi adeò languidi, vt neque lacertos erigere quirent. Postquam vero se in arcem receperunt, non commodè satis conditas dapes, quibus reficerentur, inuenerunt, nec fortè asperi maiicii panis bucellas, aut aquam potabilem, de vino aut carnibus sublata erat cura." (Martyr, De Orbe Novo, dec. 5, cap. 6.) See also, for the hard fighting in the last pages, Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 13,—Rel. Seg. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, pp. 140–142, — Carta del Exército, MS.,—Gonzalo de las Casas, Defensa, MS., Parte 1, cap. 26,—Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 9, 10,—Gomara, Crónica, cap. 107.

[22] The sentiment is expressed with singular energy in the verses of Voltaire:

"Mais renoncer aux dieux que l'on croit dans sons cœur,
C'est le crime d'un lâche, et non pas une erreur;
C'est trahir à la fois, sous un masque hypocrite,
Et le dieu qu'on préfère, et le dieu que l'on quitte:
C'est mentir au Ciel même, à l'univers, à soi."
ALZIRE, Acte 5, sc. 5.

dence to the Spaniards. His intercourse with them had, doubtless, not sharpened his desire to embrace their communion; and the calamities of his country he might consider as sent by his gods to punish him for his hospitality to those who had desecrated and destroyed their shrines.[23]

When father Olmedo, therefore, kneeling at his side, with the uplifted crucifix, affectionately besought him to embrace the sign of man's redemption, he coldly repulsed the priest, exclaiming, "I have but a few moments to live; and will not at this hour desert the faith of my fathers."[24] One thing, however, seemed to press heavily on Montezuma's mind. This was the fate of his children, especially of three daughters, whom he had by his two wives; for there were certain rites of marriage, which distinguished the lawful wife from the concubine. Calling Cortés to his bedside, he earnestly commended these children to his care, as "the most precious jewels that he could leave him." He besought the general to interest his master, the emperor, in their behalf, and to see that they should not be left destitute, but be allowed some portion of their rightful inheritance. "Your lord will do this," he concluded, "if it were only for the friendly offices I have rendered the Spaniards, and for the love I have shown them,—though it has brought me to this condi-

[23] Camargo, the Tlascalan convert, says, he was told by several of the Conquerors, that Montezuma was baptized at his own desire in his last moments, and that Cortés and Alvarado stood sponsors on the occasion. "Muchos afirman de los conquistadores que yo conocì, que estando en el artículo de la muerte, pidió agua de batismo é que fué batizado y murió Cristiano, aunque en esto hay grades dudas y diferentes paresceres; mas eomo digo que de personas fidedignas conquistádores de los primeros dest tierra de quien fuímos informados, supímos que murió batizado y Cristiano, é que fuéron sus padrinos del batismo Fernando Cortés y Don Pedro de Alvarado." (Hist. de Tlascala, MS.) According to Gomara, the Mexican monarch desired to be baptized before the arrival of Narvaez. The ceremony was deferred till Easter, that it might be performed with greater effect. But in the hurry and bustle of the subsequent scenes it was forgotten, and he died without the stain of infidelity having been washed away from him. (Crónica, cap. 107.) Torquemada, not often a Pyrrhonist where the honor of the faith is concerned, rejects these tales as irreconcilable with the subsequent silence of Cortés himself, as well as of Alvarado, who would have been loud to proclaim an event so long in vain desired by them. (Monarch. Ind., lib. 4, cap. 70.) The criticism of the father is strongly supported by the fact, that neither of the preceding accounts is corroborated by writers of any weight, while they are contradicted by several, by popular tradition, and, it may be added, by one another.

[24] "Respondió, Que por la media hora que le quedaba de vida no se queria apartar de la religion de sus Padres." Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 10.) "Ya he dicho," says Diaz, "la tristeza que todos nosotros hutsímos por ello, y aun al Frayle de la Merced, que siempre estaua con él, y no le pudo atraer á que se bolviesse Christiano." Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 127.

tion! But for this I bear them no ill-will." [25] Such, according to Cortés himself, were the words of the dying monarch. Not long after, on the 30th June, 1520,[26] he expired in the arms of some of his own nobles, who still remained faithful in their attendance on his person. "Thus," exclaims a native historian, one of his enemies, a Tlascalan, "thus died the unfortunate Montezuma, who had swayed the sceptre with such consummate policy and wisdom; and who was held in greater reverence and awe than any other prince of his lineage, or any, indeed, that ever sat on a throne in this Western World. With him may be said to have terminated the royal line of the Aztecs, and the glory to have passed away from the empire, which under him had reached the zenith of its prosperity." [27] "The tidings of his death," says the old Castilian chronicler, Diaz, "were received with real grief by every cavalier and soldier in the army who had had access to his person; for we all loved him as a father, —and no wonder, seeing how good he was." [28] This simple, but emphatic, testimony to his desert, at such a time, is in itself the best refutation of the suspicions occasionally entertained of his fidelity to the Christians.[29]

[25] *Aunque no le pesaba dello;* literally, "although he did not repent of it." But this would be rather too much for human nature to assert; and it is probable the language of the Indian prince underwent some little change, as it was sifted through the interpretation of Marina. The Spanish reader will find the original conversation, as reported by Cortés himself, in the remarkable document (*Appendix, Part* 2, *No.* 12).—The general adds, that he faithfully complied with Montezuma's request, receiving his daughters, after the Conquest, into his own family, where, *agreeably to their royal father's desire they were baptized*, and instructed in the doctrines and usages of the Christian faith. They were afterwards married to Castilian hidalgos, and handsome dowries were assigned them by the government. See note 36 of this Chapter.

[26] I adopt Clavigero's chronology, which cannot be far from truth. (Stor. del Messico, tom. III. p. 131.) And yet there are reasons for supposing he must have died at least a day sooner.

[27] "De suerte que le tiráron una pedrada con una honda y le diéron en la cabeza de que vino á morir el desdichado Rey, habiendo gobernado este nuevo Mundo con la mayor prudencia y gobierno que se puede imaginar, siendo el mas tenido y reverenciado y adorado Señor que en el mundo ha habido, y en su linaje, como es cosa pública y notoria en toda la maquina deste Nuevo Mundo, donde con la muerte de tan gran Señor se acabáron los Reyes Culhuaques Mejicanos, y todo su poder y mando, estando en la mayor felicidad de su monarquía; y ansí no hay de que fiar en las cosas desta vida sino en solo Dios." Hist. de Tlascala, MS.

[28] "Y Cortés lloró por él, y todos nuestros Capitanes, y soldados: é hombres huvo entre nosotros de los que le conociamos, y tratauamos, que tan llorado fué, como si fuera nuestro padre, y no nos hemos de maravillar dello, viendo que tan bueno era." Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 126.

[29] "He loved the Christians," says Herrera, "as well as could be judged from appearances. (Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10 cap. 10.) "They say,"

It is not easy to depict the portrait of Montezuma in its true colors, since it has been exhibited to us under two aspects, of the most opposite and contradictory character. In the accounts gathered of him by the Spaniards, on coming into the country, he was uniformly represented as bold and warlike, unscrupulous as to the means of gratifying his ambition, hollow and perfidious, the terror of his foes, with a haughty bearing which made him feared even by his own people. They found him, on the contrary, not merely affable and gracious, but disposed to waive all the advantages of his own position, and to place them on a footing with himself; making their wishes his law; gentle even to effeminacy in his deportment, and constant in his friendship, while his whole nation was in arms against them.—Yet these traits, so contradictory, were truly enough drawn. They are to be explained by the extraordinary circumstances of his position.

When Montezuma ascended the throne, he was scarcely twenty-three years of age. Young, and ambitious of extending his empire, he was continually engaged in war, and is said to have been present himself in nine pitched battles.[30] He was greatly renowned for his martial prowess, for he belonged to the *Quachictin*, the highest military order of his nation, and one into which but few even of its sovereigns had been admit-

remarks the general's chaplain, "that Montezuma, though often urged to it, never consented to the death of a Spaniard, nor to the injury of Cortés, whom he loved exceedingly. But there are those who dispute this." (Gomara, Crónica, cap. 107.) Don Thoan Cano assured Oviedo, that, during all the troubles of the Spaniards with the Mexicans, both in the absence of Cortés, and after his return, the emperor did his best to supply the camp with provisions. (See *Appendix Part 2, No.* 11.) And finally, Cortés himself, in an instrument already referred to, dated six years after Montezuma's death, bears emphatic testimony to the good-will he had shown to Spaniards, and particularly acquits him of any share in the late rising, which, says the Conqueror, "I had trusted to suppress through his assistance." See *Appendix, Part 2, No.* 12.

The Spanish historians, in general,—notwithstanding an occasional intimation of a doubt as to his good faith towards their countrymen,—make honorable mention of the many excellent qualities of the Indian prince. Solís, however, the most eminent of all, dismisses the account of his death with the remark, that "his last hours were spent in breathing vengeance and maledictions against his people; until he surrendered up to Satan—with whom he had frequent communication in his lifetime—the eternal possession of his soul!" (Conquista de México, lib. 4, cap. 15.) Fortunately, the historiographer of the Indians could know as little of Montezuma's fate in the next world, as he appears to have known of it in this. Was it bigotry, or a desire to set his own hero's character in a brighter light, which led him thus unworthily to darken that of his Indian rival!

30) "Dicen que venció neuve Batallas, i otros nueve Campos, en desafio vno á vno." Gomara, Crônica, cap. 107.

ted.[31] In later life, he preferred intrigue to violence, as more consonant to his character and priestly education. In this he was as great an adept as any prince of his time, and, by arts not very honorable to himself, succeeded in filching away much of the territory of his royal kinsman of Tezcuco. Severe in the administration of justice, he made important reforms in the arrangement of the tribunals. He introduced other innovations in the royal household, creating new offices, introducing a lavish magnificence and forms of courtly etiquette unknown to his ruder predecessors. He was, in short, most attentive to all that concerned the exterior and pomp of royalty.[32] Stately and decorous he was careful of his own dignity, and might be said to be as great an "actor of majesty" among the barbarian potentates of the new world, as Louis the Fourteenth was among the polished princes of Europe.

He was deeply tinctured, moreover, with that spirit of bigotry, which threw such a shade over the latter days of the French monarch. He received the Spaniards as the beings predicted by his oracles. The anxious dread, with which he had evaded their proffered visit, was founded on the same feelings which led him so blindly to resign himself to them on their approach. He felt himself rebuked by their superior genius. He at once conceded all that they demanded,—his treasures, his power, even his person. For their sake, he forsook his wonted occupations, his pleasures, his most familiar habits. He might be said to forego his nature; and, as his subjects asserted, to change his sex and become a woman. If we cannot refuse our contempt for the pusillanimity of the Aztec monarch, it should be mitigated by the consideration, that his pusillanimity sprung from his superstition, and that superstition in the savage is the substitute for religious principle in the civilized man.

It is not easy to contemplate the fate of Montezuma without feelings of the strongest compassion;—to see him thus borne along the tide of events beyond his power to avert or control; to see him, like some stately tree, the pride of his own Indian forests, towering aloft in the pomp and majesty of its branches, by its very eminence a mark for the thunderbolt, the first victim of the tempest which was to sweep over its native hills! When

[31] One other only of his predecessors, Tizoc, is shown by the Aztec Paintings to have belonged to this knightly order, according to Clavigero. Stor. del Messico, tom. II. p. 140.

[32] "Era mas cauteloso, y ardidoso, que valeroso. En las Armas, y modo, de su govierno, fué muy justiciero; en las cosas tocantes á ser estimado y tenido en su Dignidad y Majestad Real de condicion muy severo, aunque cuerdo y gracioso." Ixtlilxochitl, Hist. Chich., MS., cap. 88.

the wise king of Tezcuco addressed his royal relative at his coronation, he exclaimed, "Happy the empire, which is now in the meridian of its prosperity, for the sceptre is given to one whom the Almighty has in his keeping; and the nations shall hold him in reverence!"[33] Alas! the subject of this auspicious invocation lived to see his empire melt away like the winter's wreath; to see a strange race drop, as it were, from the clouds on his land; to find himself a prisoner in the palace of his fathers, the companion of those who were the enemies of his gods and his people; to be insulted, reviled, trodden in the dust, by the meanest of his subjects, by those who, a few months previous, had trembled at his glance; drawing his last breath in the halls of the stranger,—a lonely outcast in the heart of his own capital! He was the sad victim of destiny,—a destiny as dark and irresistible in its march, as that which broods over the mythic legends of Antiquity![34]

Montezuma, at the time of his death, was about forty-one years old, of which he reigned eighteen. His person and manners have been already described. He left a numerous progeny by his various wives, most of whom, having lost their consideration after the Conquest, fell into obscurity, as they mingled with the mass of the Indian population.[35] Two of them, however, a son and a daughter, who embraced Christianity, became the founders of noble houses in Spain.[36] The government, will-

[33] The whole address is given by Torquemada, Monarch. Ind., llb. 4, cap 68.

[34] Τίχνη δ' ἀνάγκης ασθενεστέρα μακρῷ.
Τίς οὖν ἀνάγκης ἐστὶν οἰακοσπρσφος;
Μαῖραι τρίμορφοι, μνημονές τ' Ἐριννύες.
Τούτων ἄρ' ὁ Ζεύς ἐστιν ἀσθενέστερος;
Ουκουν ἀνέκψύγοι γε τὴν πεπρωένην.
ÆSCHYL., Prometh., v. 514-518.

[35] Senor de Calderon, the late Spanish minister at Mexico, informs me, that he has more than once passed by an Indian dwelling, where the Indians in his suite made a reverence, saying it was occupied by a descendant of Montezuma.

[36] This son, baptized by the name of Pedro, was descended from one of the royal concubines. Montezuma had two lawful wives. By the first of these, named Teçalco, he had a son, who perished in the flight from Mexico; and a daughter named Tecuichpo who embraced Christianity, and received the name of Isabella. She was married when very young to her cousin Guatemozin; and lived long enough after his death to give her hand to three Castilians, all of honorable family. From two of these, Don Pedro Gallejo, and Don Thoan Cano, descended the illustrious families of the Andrada and Cano Montezuma.

Montezuma, by his second wife, the princess Acatlan, left two daughters, named, after their conversion, Maria and Leonor. The former died without

ing to show its gratitude for the large extent of empire derived from their ancestor, conferred on them ample estates, and important hereditary honors; and the Counts of Montezuma and Tula, intermarrying with the best blood of Castile, intimated by their names and titles their illustrious descent from the royal dynasty of Mexico.[37]

Montezuma's death was a misfortune to the Spaniards. While he lived, they had a precious pledge in their hands, which in extremity, they might possibly have turned to account. Now the last link was snapped which connected them with the natives of the country. But independently of interested feelings, Cortés and his officers were much affected by his death from personal considerations, and, when they gazed on the cold remains of the ill-starred monarch, they may have felt a natural compunction, as they contrasted his late flourishing condition with that to which his friendship for them had now reduced him.

The Spanish commander showed all respect for his memory. His body, arrayed in its royal robes, was laid decently on a bier, and borne on the shoulders of his nobles to his subjects in the city. What honors, if any, indeed, were paid to his remains, is uncertain. A sound of wailing, distinctly heard in the western quarters of the capital, was interpreted by the Spaniards into the moans of a funeral procession, as it bore the body to be

issue. Doña Leonor married with a Spanish cavalier, Cristóval de Valderrama, from whom descended the family of the Sotelos de Montezuma. To which of these branches belonged the counts of Miravalle, noticed by Humboldt, (Essai Politique, tom II. p. 73, note,) I am ignorant.

The royal genealogy is minutely exhibited in a Memorial, setting forth the claims of Montezuma's grandsons to certain property in right of their respective mothers. The document, which is without date, is among the MSS. of Muñoz.

[37] It is interesting to know that a descendant of the Aztec emperor, Don Joseph Sarmiento Valladares, Count of Montezuma ruled as viceroy, from 1697 to 1701, over the dominions of his barbaric ancestors. (Humboldt, Essai Politique, tom. II. p. 93, note.) Solís speaks of this noble house, grandees of Spain, who intermingled their blood with that of the Guzmans and the Mendozas. Clavigero has traced their descent from the emperor's son Iohualicahua, or Don Pedro Montezuma, as he was called after his baptism, down to the close of the eighteenth century. (See Solís, Conquista, lib. 4, cap. 15.—Clavigero, Stor. del Messico, tom. I. p. 302, tom. III. p. 132,) The last of the line, of whom I have been able to obtain any intelligence, died not long since in this country. He was very wealthy, having large estates in Spain, —but was not, as it appears, very wise. When seventy years old or more, he passed over to Mexico, in the vain hope, that the nation, in deference to his descent, might place him on the throne of his Indian ancestors, so recently occupied by the presumptuous Iturbide. But the modern Mexicans, with all their detestation of the old Spaniards, showed no respect for the royal blood of the Aztecs. The unfortunate nobleman retired to New Orleans, where he soon after put an end to his existence by blowing out his brains,—not for ambition, however, if report be true, but disappointed love!

laid among those of his ancestors, under the princely shades of Chapoltepec.[88] Others state, that it was removed to a burial-place in the city named Copalco, and there burnt with the usual solemnities and signs of lamentation by the chiefs, but not without some unworthy insults from the Mexican populace.[89] Whatever be the fact, the people, occupied with the stirring scenes in which they were engaged, were probably not long mindful of the monarch, who had taken no share in their late patriotic movements. Nor is it strange that the very memory of his sepulchre should be effaced in the terrible catastrophe which afterwards overwhelmed the capital, and swept away every landmark from its surface.

[88] Gomara, Crónica, cap. 107.—Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 10.

[89] Torquemada, Monarch. Ind., lib. 4, cap 7.

CHAPTER III.

COUNCIL OF WAR.—SPANIARDS EVACUATE THE CITY.—NOCHE TRISTE, OR "THE MELANCHOLY NIGHT."—TERRIBLE SLAUGHTER.—HALT FOR THE NIGHT.—AMOUNT OF LOSSES.

1520.

THERE was no longer any question as to the expediency of evacuating the capital. The only doubt was as to the time of doing so, and the route. The Spanish commander called a council of officers to deliberate on these matters. It was his purpose to retreat on Tlascala, and in that capital to decide according to circumstances on his future operations. After some discussion, they agreed on the causeway of Tlacopan as the avenue by which to leave the city. It would, indeed, take them back by a circuitous route, considerably longer than either of those by which they had approached the capital. But, for that reason, it would be less likely to be guarded, as least suspected; and the causeway itself, being shorter than either of the other entrances, would sooner place the army in comparative security on the main land.

There was some difference of opinion in respect to the hour of departure. The day-time, it was argued by some, would be preferable, since it would enable them to see the nature and extent of their danger, and to provide against it. Darkness would be much more likely to embarrass their own movements than those of the enemy, who were familiar with the ground. A thousand impediments would occur in the night, which might prevent their acting in concert, or obeying, or even ascertaining, the orders of the commander. But, on the other hand, it was urged, that the night presented many obvious advantages in dealing with a foe who rarely carried his hostilities beyond the day. The late active operations of the Spaniards had thrown the Mexicans off their guard, and it was improbable they would anticipate so speedy a departure of their enemies. With celerity and caution, they might succeed, therefore, in making their escape from the

town, possibly over the causeway, before their retreat should be discovered; and, could they once get beyond that pass of peril, they felt little apprehension for the rest.

These views were fortified, it is said, by the counsels of a soldier named Botello, who professed the mysterious science of judicial astrology. He had gained credit with the army by some predictions which had been verified by the events; those lucky hits which make chance pass for calculation with the credulous multitude.[1] This man recommended to his countrymen by all means to evacuate the place in the night, as the hour most propitious to them, although he should perish in it. The event proved the astrologer better acquainted with his own horoscope than with that of others.[2]

It is possible Botello's predictions had some weight in determining the opinion of Cortés. Superstition was the feature of the age, and the Spanish general, as we have seen, had a full measure of its bigotry. Seasons of gloom, moreover, dispose the mind to a ready acquiescence in the marvellous. It is, however, quite as probable that he made use of the astrologer's opinion, finding it coincided with his own, to influence that of his men, and inspire them with higher confidence. At all events, it was decided to abandon the city that very night.

The general's first care was to provide for the safe transportation of the treasure. Many of the common soldiers had converted their share of the prize, as we have seen, into gold chains, collars, or other ornaments, which they easily carried about their persons. But the royal fifth, together with that of Cortés himself, and much of the rich booty of the principal cavaliers, had been converted into bars and wedges of solid gold, and deposited in one of the strong apartments of the palace. Cortés delivered the share belonging to the Crown to the royal officers, assigning them one of the strongest horses, and a guard of Castilian soldiers, to transport it.[3] Still, much of the treasure, belonging

[1] Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 47.

The astrologer predicted that Cortés would be reduced to the greatest extremity of distress, and afterwards come to great honor and fortune. (Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 128.) He showed himself as cunning in his art, as the West Indian sybil who foretold the destiny of the unfortunate Josephine.

[2] "Pues al astrólogo Botello, no le aprouechó su astrologia, que tambien alli murió." Ibid., ubi supra.

[3] The disposition of the treasure has been stated with some discrepancy, though all agree as to its ultimate fate. The general himself did not escape the imputation of negligence, and even peculation, most unfounded, from his enemies. The account in the text is substantiated by the evidence, under oath, of the most respectable names in the expedition, as given in the instrument already more than once referred to. "Hizo sacar el oro é joyas de sus Al-

both to the Crown and to individuals, was necessarily abandoned, from the want of adequate means of conveyance. The metal lay scattered in shining heaps along the floor, exciting the cupidity of the soldiers. "Take what you will of it," said Cortés to his men. "Better you should have it, than these Mexican hounds.[4] But be careful not to overload yourselves, He travels safest in the dark night who travels lightest." His own more wary followers took heed to his counsel, helping themselves to a few articles of least bulk, though, it might be, of greatest value.[5] But the troops of Narvaez, pining for riches, of which they had heard so much, and hitherto seen so little, showed no such discretion. To them it seemed as if the very mines of Mexico were turned up before them, and, rushing on the treacherous spoil, they greedily loaded themselves with as much of it, not merely as they could accommodate about their persons, but as they could stow away in wallets, boxes, or any other mode of conveyance at their disposal.[6]

Cortés next arranged the order of march. The van, composed of two hundred Spanish foot, he placed under the command of the valiant Gonzalo de Sandoval, supported by Diego de Ordaz, Francisco de Lujo, and about twenty other cavaliers. The rearguard, constituting the strength of the infantry, was intrusted to Pedro de Alvarado, and Velasquez de Leon. The general himself took charge of the "battle," or centre, in which went the baggage, some of the heavy guns, most of which, however, remained in the rear, the treasure, and the prisoners. These consisted of a son and two daughters of Montezuma, Cacama, the deposed lord of Tezcuco, and several other nobles, whom Cortés retained as important pledges in his future negotiations with the enemy. The Tlascalans were distributed pretty equally among the three divisions; and Cortés had under his immediate

tezas é le dió é entregó á los otros oficiales Alcaldes é Regidores, é les dixo á la rason que así se lo entregó, que todos viesen el mejor modo é manera que habia para lo poder salvar, que él allí estaba para por su parte hacer lo que fuese possible é poner su persona á qualquier trance é riesgo que sobre lo salvar le vieniese. . . . . El qual les dió para ello una muy buena yegua, é quatro ó cinco Españoles de mucha confianza á quien se encargo la dha yegua cargado con el otro oro." Probanza á pedimento de Juan de Lexalde.

[4] "Desde aquí se lo doi, como se ha de quedar aquí perdido entre estos perros." Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 128.—Oviedo, Hist de las Ind., MS., lib 33, cap. 47.

[5] Captain Diaz tells us that he contented himself with four *chalchivitl*,—the green stones so much prized by the natives,—which he cunningly picked out of the royal coffers before Cortés' majordomo had time to secure them. The prize proved of great service, by supplying him the means of obtaining food and medicine, when in great extremity, afterwards, from the people of the country. Ibid., loc. cit.

[6] Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., ubi supra.

command a hundred picked soldiers, his own veterans most attached to his service, who, with Christoval de Olid, Francisco de Morla, Alonso de Avila, and two or three other cavaliers, formed a select corps, to act wherever occasion might require.

The general had already superintended the construction of a portable bridge to be laid over the open canals in the causeway. This was given in charge to an officer named Magarino, with forty soldiers under his orders, all pledged to defend the passage to the last extremity. The bridge was to be taken up when the entire army had crossed one of the breaches, and transported to the next. There were three of these openings in the causeway, and most fortunate would it have been for the expedition, if the foresight of the commander had provided the same number of bridges. But the labor would have been great, and time was short.[7]

At midnight the troops were under arms, in readiness for the march. Mass was performed by father Olmedo, who invoked the protection of the Almighty through the awful perils of the night. The gates were thrown open, and, on the first of July, 1520, the Spaniards for the last time sallied forth from the walls of the ancient fortress, the scene of so much suffering and such indomitable courage.[8]

The night was cloudy, and a drizzling rain, which fell without intermission, added to the obscurity. The great square before the palace was deserted, as, indeed, it had been since the fall of Montezuma. Steadily, and as noiselessly as possible, the Spaniards held their way along the great street of Tlacopan, which so lately had resounded to the tumult of battle. All was now hushed in silence; and they were only reminded of the past by the occasional presence of some solitary corpse, or a dark heap of the slain, which too plainly told where the strife had been hottest. As they passed along the lanes and alleys which opened into the great street, or looked down the canals, whose polished surface gleamed with a sort of ebon lustre through the

[7] Gomara, Crónica, cap. 109.—Rel. Seg. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 143. —Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 13, 47.

[8] There is some difficulty in adjusting the precise date of their departure, as, indeed, of most events in the Conquest; attention to chronology being deemed somewhat superfluous by the old chroniclers. Ixtlilxochitl, Gomara, and others fix the date at July 10th. But this is wholly contrary to the letter of Cortés, which states, that the army reached Tlascala on the eighth of July, not the tenth, as Clavigero misquotes him; (Stor. del Messico, tom. III. pp. 135, 136, nota;) and from the general's accurate account of their progress each day, it appears that they left the capital on the last night of June, or rather the morning of July 1st. It was the night, he also adds, following the affair of the bridges in the city. Comp. Rel. Seg., ap. Lorenzana, pp. 142–149.

obscurity of night, they easily fancied that they discerned the shadowy forms of their foe lurking in ambush, and ready to spring on them. But it was only fancy; and the city slept undisturbed even by the prolonged echoes of the tramp of the horses, and the hoarse rumbling of the artillery and baggage trains. At length, a lighter space beyond the dusky line of buildings showed the van of the army that it was emerging on the open causeway. They might well have congratulated themselves on having thus escaped the dangers of an assault in the city itself, and that a brief time would place them in comparative safety on the opposite shore.—But the Mexicans were not all asleep.

As the Spaniards drew near the spot where the street opened on the causeway, and were preparing to lay the portable bridge across the uncovered breach, which now met their eyes, several Indian sentinels, who had been stationed at this, as at the other approaches to the city, took the alarm, and fled, rousing their countrymen by their cries. The priests, keeping their night watch on the summit of the *teocallis*, instantly caught the tidings and sounded their shells, while the huge drum in the desolate temple of the war-god sent forth those solemn tones, which, heard only in seasons of calamity, vibrated through every corner of the capital. The Spaniards saw that no time was to be lost. The bridge was brought forward and fitted with all possible expedition. Sandoval was the first to try its strength, and, riding across, was followed by his little body of chivalry, his infantry, and Tlascalan allies, who formed the first division of the army. Then came Cortés and his squadrons, with the baggage, ammunition wagons, and a part of the artillery. But before they had time to defile across the narrow passage, a gathering sound was heard, like that of a mighty forest agitated by the winds. It grew louder and louder, while on the dark waters of the lake was heard a plashing noise, as of many oars. Then came a few stones and arrows striking at random among the hurrying troops. They fell every moment faster and more furious, till they thickened into a terrible tempest, while the very heavens were rent with the yells and war-cries of myriads of combatants, who seemed all at once to be swarming over land and lake!

The Spaniards pushed steadily on through this arrowy sleet, though the barbarians, dashing their canoes against the sides of the causeway, clambered up and broke in upon their ranks. But the Christians, anxious only to make their escape, declined all combat except for self-preservation. The cavaliers, spurring forward their steeds, shook off their assailants, and rode over their prostrate bodies, while the men on foot with their good swords

or the butts of their pieces drove them headlong again down the sides of the dike.

But the advance of several thousand men, marching, probably on a front of not more than fifteen or twenty abreast, necessarily required much time, and the leading files had already reached the second breach in the causeway before those in the rear had entirely traversed the first. Here they halted; as they had no means of effecting a passage, smarting all the while under unintermitting volleys from the enemy, who were clustered thick on the waters around this second opening. Sorely distressed, the van-guard sent repeated messages to the rear to demand the portable bridge. At length the last of the army had crossed, and Magarino and his sturdy followers endeavored to raise the ponderous frame-work. But it stuck fast in the sides of the dike. In vain they strained every nerve. The weight of so many men and horses, and above all the heavy artillery, had wedged the timbers so firmly in the stones and earth, that it was beyond their power to dislodge them. Still they labored amidst a torrent of missiles, until, many of them slain, and all wounded, they were obliged to abandon the attempt.

The tidings soon spread from man to man, and no sooner was their dreadful import comprehended, than a cry of despair arose, which for a moment drowned all the noise of conflict. All means of retreat were cut off. Scarcely hope was left. The only hope was in such desperate exertions as each could make for himself. Order and subordination were at an end. Intense danger produced intense selfishness. Each thought only of his own life. Pressing forward, he trampled down the weak and the wounded, heedless whether it were friend or foe. The leading files, urged on by the rear, were crowded on the brink of the gulf. Sandoval, Ordaz, and the other cavaliers dashed into the water. Some succeeded in swimming their horses across. Others failed, and some, who reached the opposite bank, being overturned in the ascent, rolled headlong with their steeds into the lake. The infantry followed pell-mell, heaped promiscuously on one another frequently pierced by the shafts, or struck down by the war-clubs of the Aztecs; while many an unfortunate victim was dragged half-stunned on board their canoes, to be reserved for a protracted, but more dreadful death.[9]

The carnage raged fearfully along the length of the causeway.

[9] Ibid., p. 143.—Camargo, Hist. de Tlascala, MS. Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 128.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap 13, 47.—Sahagun. Hist. de Nueva España, MS., lib. 12, cap. 24.—Martyr, De Orbe Novo, dec. 5, cap. 6.—Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 4.—Probanza en la Villa Segura, MS.

Its shadowy bulk presented a mark of sufficient distinctness for the enemy's missiles, which often prostrated their own countrymen in the blind fury of the tempest. Those nearest the dike, running their canoes alongside, with a force that shattered them to pieces, leaped on the land, and grappled with the Christians, until both came rolling down the side of the causeway together. But the Aztec fell among his friends, while his antagonist was borne away in triumph to the sacrifice. The struggle was long and deadly. The Mexicans were recognized by their white cotton tunics, which showed faint through the darkness. Above the combatants arose a wild and discordant clamor, in which horrid shouts of vengeance were mingled with groans of agony, with invocations of the saints and the blessed Virgin, and with screams of women;[10] for there were several women, both natives and Spaniards, who had accompanied the Christian camp. Among these, one named Maria de Estrada is particularly noticed for the courage she displayed, battling with broadsword and target like the stanchest of the warriors.[11]

The opening in the causeway, meanwhile, was filled up with the wreck of matter which had been forced into it, ammunition-wagons, heavy guns, bales of rich stuffs scattered over the waters, chests of solid ingots, and bodies of men and horses, till over this dismal ruin a passage was gradually formed, by which those in the rear were enabled to clamber to the other side.[12] Cortés, it is said, found a place that was fordable, where halting, with the water up to his saddle-girths, he endeavored to check the confusion, and lead his followers by a safer path to the opposite bank. But his voice was lost in the wild uproar, and finally, hurrying on with the tide, he pressed forward with a

[10] "Pues la grita, y lloros, y lástimas q deziã demãdando socorro: Ayudadme, q me ahogo, otros: Socorredme, q me matã, otros demãdando ayuda á N. Señora Santa María, y á Señor Santiago." Bernal Diaz, Ibid., cap. 128.

[11] "Y asimismo se mostró mui valerosa en este aprieto, y conflicto María de Estrada, la qual con vna Espada, y vna Rodela en las Manos, hiço hechos maravillosos y se antraba por los Enemigos con tanto corage, y ánimo, como si fuera vno de los mas valientes Hombres de el Mundo, olvidada de que era Muger. . . . . Casó esta Señora con Pedro Sanchez Farfan, y diéronle en Encomienda el Pueblo de Tetela." Torquemada, Monarch. Ind., lib. 4, cap. 72.

[12] Camargo, Hist. de Tlascala, MS.—Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 128.

"Por la gran priesa que daban de ambas partes de el camino, comenzáron á caer en aquel foso, y cayéron juntos, que de Españoles, que de Indios y de caballos, y de cargas, el foso se hinchó hasta arriba, cayendo los unos sobre los otros, y los otro sobre los otros, de manera que todos los del bagage quedáron allí ahogados, y los de la retaguardia pasáron sobre los muertos." Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva España, MS., lib. 12, cap. 24.

few trusty cavaliers, who remained near his person, to the van; but not before he had seen his favorite page, Juan de Salazar, struck down, a corpse, by his side. Here he found Sandoval and his companions, halting before the third and last breach, endeavoring to cheer on their followers to surmount it. But their resolution faltered. It was wide and deep; though the passage was not so closely beset by the enemy as the preceding ones. The cavaliers again set the example by plunging into the water. Horse and foot followed as they could, some swimming, others with dying grasp clinging to the manes and tails of the struggling animals. Those fared best, as the general had predicted, who travelled lightest; and many were the unfortunate wretches, who, weighed down by the fatal gold which they loved so well, were buried with it in the salt floods of the lake.[13] Cortés, with his gallant comrades, Olid, Morla, Sandoval, and some few others, still kept in the advance, leading his broken remnant off the fatal causeway. The din of battle lessened in the distance; when the rumor reached them, that the rear-guard would be wholly overwhelmed without speedy relief. It seemed almost an act of desperation; but the generous hearts of the Spanish cavaliers did not stop to calculate danger, when the cry for succor reached them. Turning their horses' bridles, they galloped back to the theatre of action, worked their way through the press, swam the canal, and placed themselves in the thick of the *mêlée* on the opposite bank.[14]

The first gray of the morning was now coming over the waters. It showed the hideous confusion of the scene which had been shrouded in the obscurity of night. The dark masses of combatants, stretching along the dike, were seen struggling for mastery, until the very causeway on which they stood appeared to tremble, and reel to and fro, as if shaken by an earthquake; while the bosom of the lake, as far as the eye could reach, was darkened by canoes crowded with warriors, whose spears and bludgeons, armed with blades of "volcanic glass," gleamed in the morning light.

The cavaliers found Alvarado unhorsed, and defending himself with a poor handful of followers against an overwhelming tide of the enemy. His good steed, which had borne him through

[13] "E los que habian ido con Narvaez arrojáronse en la sala, é cargáronse de aquel oro é plata quanto pudiéron; pero los menos lo gozáron, porque la carga no los dexaba pelear, é los Indios los tomaban vivos cargados; é á otros llevaban arrastrando, é á otros mataban allí; E así no se salváron sino los desocupados é que iban en la delantera." Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 47.

[14] Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 11.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 13, — Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 128.

many a hard fight, had fallen under him.[15] He was himself wounded in several places, and was striving in vain to rally his scattered column, which was driven to the verge of the canal by the fury of the enemy, then in possession of the whole rear of the causeway, where they were reinforced every hour by fresh combatants from the city. The artillery in the earlier part of the engagement had not been idle, and its iron shower, sweeping along the dike, had mowed down the assailants by hundreds. But nothing could resist their impetuosity. The front ranks, pushed on by those behind, were at length forced up to the pieces, and, pouring over them like a torrent, overthrew men and guns in one general ruin. The resolute charge of the Spanish cavaliers, who had now arrived, created a temporary check, and gave time for their countrymen to make a feeble rally. But they were speedily borne down by the returning flood. Cortés and his companions were compelled to plunge again into the lake,—though all did not escape. Alvarado stood on the brink for a moment, hesitating what to do. Unhorsed as he was, to throw himself into the water, in the face of the hostile canoes that now swarmed around the opening, afforded but a desperate chance of safety. He had but a second for thought. He was a man of powerful frame, and despair gave him unnatural energy. Setting his long lance firmly on the wreck which strewed the bottom of the lake, he sprung forward with all his might, and cleared the wide gap at a leap! Aztecs and Tlascalans gazed in stupid amazement, exclaiming, as they beheld the incredible feat, "This is truly the *Tonatiuh*,—the child of the Sun!"[16]—The breadth of the opening is not given. But it was so great, that the valorous captain Diaz, who well remembered the place says the leap was impossible to any man.[17] Other contempo-

[15] "Luego encontráron con Pedro de Alvarado bien herido con vna lança en la mano á pie, que la yegua alaçana ya se la auian muerto." Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 128.

[16] "Y los amigos vista tan gran hazaña quedáron maravillados, y al instante que esto viéron se arrojáron por el suelo postrados por tierra en señal de hecho tan heroico, espantable y raro, que ellos no habian visto hacer á ningun hombre, y ansí adoráron al Sol, comiendo puñados de tierra, arrancando yervas del campo, diciendo á grandes voces, verdaderamente que este hombre es *hijo del Sol*." (Camargo, Hist. de Tlascala, MS.) This writer consulted the process instituted by Alvarado's heirs, in which they set forth the merits of their ancestor, as attested by the most valorous captains of the Tlascalan nation, present at the Conquest. It *may be* that the famous leap was among these "merits," of which the historian speaks. M. de Humboldt, citing Camargo, so considers it. (Essai Politique, tom. II. p. 75.) This would do more than anything else to establish the fact. But Camargo's language does not seem to me necessarily to warrant the inference.

[17] "Se llama aora la puente del salto de Alvarado: y platicauamos muchos

raries, however, do not discredit the story.[18] It was, beyond doubt, matter of popular belief at the time; it is to this day familiarly known to every inhabitant of the capital; and the name of the *Salto de Alvarado*, "Alvarado's Leap," given to the spot, still commemorates an exploit which rivalled those of the demigods of Grecian fable.[19]

Cortés and his companions now rode forward to the front, where the troops, in a loose, disorderly manner, were marching off the fatal causeway. A few only of the enemy hung on their rear, or annoyed them by occasional flights of arrows from the lake. The attention of the Aztecs was diverted by the rich spoil that strewed the battle-ground; fortunately for the Spaniards, who, had their enemy pursued with the same ferocity with which he had fought, would, in their crippled condition, have been cut off, probably, to a man. But little molested, therefore, they were allowed to defile through the adjacent village, or suburbs, it might be called, of Popotla.[20]

The Spanish commander there dismounted from his jaded steed, and, sitting down on the steps of an Indian temple, gazed mournfully on the broken files as they passed before him. What a spectacle did they present! The cavalry, most of them dismounted, were mingled with the infantry, who dragged their feeble limbs along with difficulty; their shattered mail and tattered garments dripping with the salt ooze, showing through their rents many a bruise and ghastly wound; their bright arms soiled, their proud crests and banners gone, the baggage, artillery, all, in short, that constitutes the pride and panoply of glori-

soldados sobre ello, y no hallavamos razon, no soltura de vn hombre que tal saltasse." Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 128.

[18] Gomara, Crónica, cap. 109.—Camargo, Ibid., ubi supra.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 47.—Which last author, however, frankly says, that many, who had seen the place, declared it seemed to them impossible. "Fué tan estremado de grande el salto, que á muchos hombres que han visto aquello, he oido decir que parece cosa impossible haberlo podido saltar ninguno hombre humano. En fin él lo saltó é ganó por ello la vida, é perdiéronla muchos que atras quedaban."

[19] The spot is pointed out to every traveller. It is where a ditch, of no great width, is traversed by a small bridge not far from the western extremity of the Alameda. As the place received its name in Alvarado's time, this story could scarcely have been discountenanced by him. But, since the length of the leap, strange to say, is nowhere given, the reader can have no means of passing his own judgment on its probability.

[20] "Fué Dios servido de que los Mejicanos se ocupasen en recojer los despojos de los muertos, y las riquezas de oro y piedras que llevaba el bagage, y de sacar los muertos de aquel acequia, y á los caballos y otros bestias. Y por esto no siguiéron el alcanze, y los Españoles pudiéron ir poco á poco por su camino sin tener mucha molestia de enemigos." Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva España, MS., lib. 12, cap. 25.

ous war, forever lost. Cortés, as he looked wistfully on their thinned and disordered ranks, sought in vain for many a familiar face, and missed more than one dear companion who had stood side by side with him through all the perils of the Conquest. Though accustomed to control his emotions, or, at least, to conceal them, the sight was too much for him. He covered his face with his hands, and the tears, which trickled down revealed too plainly the anguish of his soul.[21]

He found some consolation, however, in the sight of several of the cavaliers on whom he most relied. Alvarado, Sandoval, Olid, Ordaz, Avila, were yet safe. He had the inexpressible satisfaction, also, of learning the safety of the Indian interpreter, Marina, so dear to him, and so important to the army. She had been committed, with a daughter of a Tlascalan chief, to several of that nation. She was fortunately placed in the van, and her faithful escort had carried her securely through all the dangers of the night. Aguilar, the other interpreter, had also escaped. And it was with no less satisfaction, that Cortés learned the safety of the ship-builder, Martin Lopez.[22] The general's solicitude for the fate of this man, so indispensable, as he proved, to the success of his subsequent operations, showed, that, amidst all his affliction, his indomitable spirit was looking forward to the hour of vengeance.

Meanwhile, the advancing column had reached the neighboring city of Tlacopan, (Tacuba,) once the capital of an independent principality. There it halted in the great street, as if bewildered and altogether uncertain what course to take; like a herd of panic-struck deer, who, flying from the hunters, with the cry of hound and horn still ringing in their ears, look wildly around for some glen or copse in which to plunge for concealment. Cortés, who had hastily mounted and rode on to the front again, saw the danger of remaining in a populous place, where the inhabitants might sorely annoy the troops from the *azoteas*, with little risk to themselves. Pushing forward, therefore, he soon led them into the country. There he endeavored to reform his disorganized battalions, and bring them to something like order.[23]

[21] Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 47.—Ixtlilxochitl, Hist. Chich., MS., cap. 89. — Gomara, Crónica, cap. 109.

[22] Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 12.

[23] "Tacuba," says that interesting traveller, Latrobe, "lies near the foot of the hills, and is at the present day chiefly noted for the large and noble church which was erected there by Cortés. And hard by, you trace the lines of a Spanish encampment. I do not hazard the opinion, but it might appear by the coincidence, that this was the very position chosen by Cortés for his intrenchment, after the retreat just mentioned, and before he commenced his

Hard by, at no great distance on the left, rose an eminence, looking towards a chain of mountains which fences in the Valley on the west. It was called the Hill of Otoncalpolco, and sometimes the Hill of Montezuma.[24] It was crowned with an Indian *teocalli*, with its large outworks of stone covering an ample space, and by its strong position, which commanded the neighboring plain, promised a good place of refuge for the exhausted troops. But the men, disheartened and stupefied by their late reverses, seemed for the moment incapable of further exertion; and the place was held by a body of armed Indians. Cortés saw the necessity of dislodging them, if he would save the remains of his army from entire destruction. The event showed he still held a control over their wills stronger than circumstances themselves. Cheering them on, and supported by his gallant cavaliers, he succeeded in infusing into the most sluggish something of his own intrepid temper, and led them up the ascent in face of the enemy. But the latter made slight resistance, and, after a few feeble volleys of missiles which did little injury, left the ground to the assailants.

It was covered by a building of considerable size, and furnished ample accommodations for the diminished numbers of the Spaniards. They found there some provisions; and more, it is said, were brought to them, in the course of the day, from some friendly Otomie villages in the neighborhood. There was, also, a quantity of fuel in the courts, destined to the uses of the temple. With this they made fires to dry their drenched garments, and busily employed themselves in dressing one another's wounds, stiff and extremely painful from exposure and long exertion. Thus refreshed, the weary soldiers threw themselves down on the floor and courts of the temple, and soon found the temporary oblivion,—which Nature seldom denies even in the greatest extremity of suffering.[25]

There was one eye in that assembly, however, which we may well believe did not so speedily close. For what agitating thoughts must have crowded on the mind of their commander, as he beheld his poor remnant of followers thus huddled together in this miserable bivouac! And this was all that survived of the brilliant array with which but a few weeks since he had

painful route towards Otumba." (Rambler in Mexico, letter 5.) It is evident from our text, that Cortés could have thrown up no intrenchment here, at least on his retreat from the capital.

[24] Lorenzana, Viage, p xiii.

[25] Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva España MS., lib. 12, cap. 24.—Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 128.—Camargo, Hist de Tlascala, MS.—Ixtilxochitl, Hist. Chich., MS., cap. 89.

entered the capital of Mexico! Where now were his dreams of conquest and empire? And what was he but a luckless adventurer, at whom the finger of scorn would be uplifted as a madman? Whichever way he turned, the horizon was almost equally gloomy, with scarcely one light spot to cheer him. He had still a weary journey before him, through perilous and unknown paths, with guides of whose fidelity he could not be assured. And how could he rely on his reception at Tlascala, the place of his destination, the land of his ancient enemies; where, formerly as a foe, and now as a friend, he had brought desolation to every family within its borders?

Yet these agitating and gloomy reflections, which might have crushed a common mind, had no power over that of Cortés; or rather, they only served to renew his energies, and quicken his perceptions, as the war of the elements purifies and gives elasticity to the atmosphere. He looked with an unblenching eye on his past reverses; but, confident in his own resources, he saw a light through the gloom which others could not. Even in the shattered relics which lay around him, resembling in their haggard aspect and wild attire a horde of famished outlaws, he discerned the materials out of which to reconstruct his ruined fortunes. In the very hour of discomfiture and general despondency, there is no doubt that his heroic spirit was meditating the plan of operations which he afterwards pursued with such dauntless constancy.

The loss sustained by the Spaniards on this fatal night, like every other event in the history of the Conquest, is reported with the greatest discrepancy. If we believe Cortés' own letter, it did not exceed one hundred and fifty Spaniards, and two thousand Indians. But the general's bulletins, while they do full justice to the difficulties to be overcome, and the importance of the results, are less scrupulous in stating the extent either of his means or of his losses. Thoan Cano, one of the cavaliers present, estimates the slain at eleven hundred and seventy Spaniards, and eight thousand allies. But this is a greater number than we have allowed for the whole army. Perhaps we may come nearest the truth by taking the computation of Gomara, who was the chaplain of Cortés, and who had free access, doubtless, not only to the general's papers, but to other authentic sources of information. According to him, the number of Christians killed and missing was four hundred and fifty, and that of natives four thousand. This, with the loss sustained in the conflict of the previous week, may have reduced the former to something more than a third, and the latter to a fourth, or, perhaps, fifth, of the original force with which they

entered the capital.[26] The brunt of the action fell on the rear-guard, few of whom escaped. It was formed chiefly of the soldiers of Narvaez, who fell the victims, in some measure, of their cupidity.[27] Forty-six of the cavalry were cut off, which with previous losses reduced the number in this branch of the service to twenty-three, and some of these in very poor condition. The greater part of the treasure, the baggage, the general's papers, including his accounts, and a minute diary of transactions since leaving Cuba,—which, to posterity, at least, would have been of more worth than the gold,—had been swallowed up by the waters.[28] The ammunition, the beautiful little train of artillery, with which Cortés had entered the city, were all gone. Not a musket even remained, the men having thrown them away, eager to disencumber themselves of all that might retard their escape on that disastrous night. Nothing,

[26] The table below may give the reader some idea of the discrepancies in numerical estimates, even among eyewitnesses, and writers who, having access to the actors, are nearly of equal authority.

Cortes, ap. Lorenzana, p. 145,	150	Spaniards,	2000	Indians killed and missing.		
Cano, ap. Oviedo, lib 33, cap. 54,	1170	"	8000	"	"	"
Probanza, &c.,	200	"	2000	"	"	"
Oviedo, Hist de las Ind., lib. 33, cap. 13,	150	"	2000	"	"	"
Camargo,	450	"	4000	"	"	"
Gomara, cap. 109,	450	"	4000	"	"	"
Ixtlilxochitl, Hist. Chich, cap.	450	"	4000	"	"	"
Sahagun, lib. 12, cap. 24,	300	"	2000	"	"	"
Herrera, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 12,	150	"	4000	"	"	"

Bernal Diaz does not take the trouble to agree with himself. After stating that the rear, on which the loss fell heaviest, consisted of 120 men, he adds, in the same paragraph, that 150 of these were slain, which number swells to 200 in a few lines further! Falstaff's men in buckram! See Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 128.

Cano's estimate embraces, it is true, those—but their number was comparatively small—who perished subsequently on the march. The same authority states, that 270 of the garrison, ignorant of the proposed departure of their countrymen, were perfidiously left in the palace of Axayacatl, where they surrendered on terms, but were subsequently all sacrificed by the Aztecs! (See *Appendix, Part 2, No. 11.*) The improbability of the monstrous story, by which the army with all its equipage could leave the citadel without the knowledge of so many of their comrades,—and this be permitted, too, at a juncture, which made every man's coöperation so important,—is too obvious to require refutation. Herrera records, what is much more probable, that Cortés gave particular orders to the captain, Ojeda, to see that none of the sleeping or wounded should, in the hurry of the moment, be overlooked in their quarters. Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 11.

[27] "Pues de los de Narvaez, todos los mas en las puentes quedáron, cargados de oro." Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 128.

[28] According to Diaz, part of the gold intrusted to the *Tlascalan* convoy was preserved. (Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 136.) From the document already cited,—Probanza de Villa Segura, MS.,—it appears, that it was a Castilian guard who had charge of it.

in short, of their military apparatus was left, but their swords, their crippled cavalry, and a few damaged crossbows, to assert the superiority of the European over the barbarian.

The prisoners, including, as already noticed, the children of Montezuma and the cacique of Tezcuco, all perished by the hands of their ignorant countrymen, it is said, in the indiscriminate fury of the assault. There were, also, some persons of consideration among the Spaniards, whose names were inscribed on the same bloody roll of slaughter. Such was Francisco de Morla, who fell by the side of Cortés, on returning with him to the rescue. But the greatest loss was that of Juan Velasquez de Leon, who, with Alvarado, had command of the rear. It was the post of danger on that night, and he fell, bravely defending it, at an early part of the retreat. He was an excellent officer, possessed of many knightly qualities, though somewhat haughty in his bearing, being one of the best connected cavaliers in the army. The near relation of the governor of Cuba, he looked coldly, at first, on the pretensions of the Cortés ; but whether from a conviction that the latter had been wronged, or from personal preference, he afterwards attached himself zealously to his leader's interests. The general requited this with a generous confidence, assigning him, as we have seen, a separate and independent command, where misconduct, or even a mistake, would have been fatal to the expedition. Velasquez proved himself worthy of the trust ; and there was no cavalier in the army, with the exception, perhaps, of Sandoval and Alvarado, whose loss would have been so deeply deplored by the commander.—Such were the disastrous results of this terrible passage of the causeway ; more disastrous than those occasioned by any other reverse which has stained the Spanish arms in the New World ; and which have branded the night on which it happened, in the national annals, with the name of the *noche triste*, "the sad or melancholy night." [29]

[29] Gomara, Crónica, cap. 109. —Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 13.—Probanza en la Villa Segura, MS.—Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 128.

CHAPTER IV.

RETREAT OF THE SPANIARDS.—DISTRESSES OF THE ARMY.—PYRAMIDS OF TEOTIHUACAN.—GREAT BATTLE OF OTUMBA.

1520.

THE Mexicans, during the day which followed the retreat of the Spaniards, remained, for the most part, quiet in their own capital, where they found occupation in cleansing the streets and causeways from the dead, which lay festering in heaps that might have bred a pestilence. They may have been employed, also, in paying the last honors to such of their warriors as had fallen, solemnizing the funeral rights by the sacrifice of their wretched prisoners, who, as they contemplated their own destiny, may well have envied the fate of their companions who left their bones on the battle-field. It was most fortunate for the Spaniards, in their extremity, that they had this breathing-time allowed them by the enemy. But Cortés knew that he could not calculate on its continuance, and, feeling how important it was to get the start of his vigilant foe, he ordered his troops to be in readiness to resume their march by midnight. Fires were left burning, the better to deceive the enemy; and at the appointed hour, the little army, without sound of drum or trumpet, but with renewed spirits, sallied forth from the gates of the *teocalli*, within whose hospitable walls they had found such seasonable succor. The place is now indicated by a Christian church dedicated to the Virgin, under the title of *Nuestra Señora de los Remedios* whose miraculous image—the very same, *it is said*, brought over by the followers of Cortés[1]—still extends her beneficent sway over the neighboring capital; and the traveller, who pauses within the precincts of the consecrated fane, may feel that he is standing on the spot made memorable by the refuge it afforded to the Conquerors in the hour of their deepest despondency.[2]

[1] Lorenzana, Viage, p. xiii.

[2] The last instance, I believe, of the direct interposition of the Virgin in behalf of the metropolis was in 1833, when she was brought into the city to

It was arranged that the sick and wounded should occupy the centre, transported on litters, or on the backs of the *temanes*, while those who were strong enough to keep their seats should mount behind the cavalry. The able-bodied soldiers were ordered to the front and rear, while others protected the flanks, thus affording all the security possible to the invalids.

The retreating army held on its way unmolested under cover of the darkness. But, as morning dawned, they beheld parties of the natives moving over the heights, or hanging at a distance, like a cloud of locusts, on their rear. They did not belong to the capital; but were gathered from the neighboring country, where the tidings of their rout had already penetrated. The charm, which had hitherto covered the white men, was gone. The dread *Teules* were no longer invincible.[8]

The Spaniards, under the conduct of their Tlascalan guides, took a circuitous route to the north, passing through Quauhtitlan, and round lake Tzompanco, (Zumpango,) thus lengthening their march, but keeping at a distance from the capital. From the eminences, as they passed along, the Indians rolled down heavy stones, mingled with volleys of darts and arrows, on the heads of the soldiers. Some were even bold enough to descend into the plain and assault the extremities of the column. But they were soon beaten off by the horse, and compelled to take refuge among the hills, where the ground was too rough for the rider to follow. Indeed, the Spaniards did not care to do so, their object being rather to fly than to fight.

In this way they slowly advanced, halting at intervals to drive off their assailants when they became too importunate, and greatly distressed by their missiles and their desultory attacks.

avert the cholera. She refused to pass the night in town, however, but was found the next morning in her own sanctuary at los Remedios, showing, by the mud with which she was plentifully bespattered, that she must have performed the distance—several leagues—through the miry ways on foot! See Latrobe, Rambler in Mexico, letter 5.

[8] The epithet by which, according to Diaz, the Castilians were constantly addressed by the natives; and which—whether correctly or not—he interprets into *gods*, or *divine beings*. (See Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 48, *et alibi*.) One of the stanzas of Ercilla intimates the existence of a similar delusion among the South American Indians,—and a similar cure of it.

> " Por dioses, como dixe, eran tenidos
> de los Indios los muestros; pero oliéron
> que de muger y hombre eran nacidos,
> y todas sus flaquezas entendiéron
> viéndolos á miserias sometidos,
> el error ignorante conociéron,
> ardiendo en viva rabia avergonzados
> por verse de mortales conquistados."
>
> LA ARAUCANA, Parte 1, Canto 2.

At night the troops usually found shelter in some town or hamlet, whence the inhabitants, in anticipation of their approach, had been careful to carry off all the provisions. The Spaniards were soon reduced to the greatest straits for subsistence. Their principal food was the wild cherry, which grew in the woods, or by the roadside. Fortunate were they, if they found a few ears of corn unplucked. More frequently nothing was left but the stalks; and with them, and the like unwholesome fare, they were fain to supply the cravings of appetite. When a horse happened to be killed, it furnished an extraordinary banquet; and Cortés himself records the fact of his having made one of a party who thus sumptuously regaled themselves, devouring the animal even to his hide.[4]

The wretched soldiers, faint with famine and fatigue, were sometimes seen to drop down lifeless on the road. Others loitered behind, unable to keep up with the march, and fell into the hands of the enemy, who followed in the track of the army like a flock of famished vultures, eager to pounce on the dying and the dead. Others, again, who strayed too far, in their eagerness to procure sustenance, shared the same fate. The number of these, at length, and the consciousness of the cruel lot for which they were reserved, compelled Cortés to introduce stricter discipline, and to enforce it by sterner punishments than he had hitherto done,—though too often ineffectually, such was the indifference to danger under the overwhelming pressure of present calamity.

In their prolonged distresses, the soldiers ceased to set a value on those very things for which they had once been content to hazard life itself. More than one, who had brought his golden treasure safe through the perils of the *noche triste*, now abandoned it as an intolerable burden; and the rude Indian peasant gleaned up, with wondering delight the bright fragments of the spoils of the capital.[5]

[4] Rel. Seg. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 147.

Hunger furnished them a sauce, says Oviedo, which made their horse-flesh as relishing as the far-famed sausages of Naples, the delicate kid of Avila, or the savory veal of Saragossa! "Con la carne del caballo tubiéron buen pasto, é se consoláron ó mitigáron en parte su hambre, é se lo comiéron sin dexar cuero, ni otra cosa dél sino los huesos, é las vñas, y el pelo; é aun las tripas no les pareció de menos buen gusto que las sobreasados de Nápoles, ó los gentiles cabritos de Abila, ó las sabrosas Terneras de Zaragosa, segun la estrema necesidad que llevaban; por que despues que de la gran cibdad de Temixtitan havian salido ninguna otra cosa comiéron sino mahiz tostado,é cocido, ó yervas del campo, y desto no tanto quanto quisîeran ŏ ovieran menester." Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 13.

[5] Herrera mentions one soldier who had succeeded in carrying off his gold to the value of 3,000 *castellanos* across the causeway, and afterwards flung it

Through these weary days Cortés displayed his usual serenity and fortitude. He was ever in the post of danger, freely exposing himself in encounters with the enemy; in one of which he received a severe wound in the head, that afterwards gave him much trouble.[6] He fared no better than the humblest soldier, and strove, by his own cheerful countenance and counsels, to fortify the courage of those who faltered, assuring them that their sufferings would soon be ended by their arrival in the hospitable "land of bread."[7] His faithful officers coöperated with him in these efforts; and the common file, indeed, especially his own veterans, must be allowed, for the most part, to have shown a full measure of the constancy and power of endurance so characteristic of their nation,—justifying the honest boast of an old chronicler, "that there were no people so capable of supporting hunger as the Spaniards, and none of them who were ever more severely tried than the soldiers of Cortés."[8] A similar fortitude was shown by the Tlascalans, trained in a rough school that made them familiar with hardship and privations. Although they sometimes threw themselves on the ground, in the extremity of famine, imploring their gods not to abandon them, they did their duty as warriors, and far from manifesting coldness towards the Spaniards as the cause of their distresses, seemed only the more firmly knit to them by the sense of a common suffering.

On the seventh morning, the army had reached the mountain rampart which overlooks the plains of Otompan, or Otumba as commonly called, from the Indian city,—now a village,—situated in them. The distance from the capital is hardly nine leagues. But the Spaniards had travelled more than thrice that distance, in their circuitous march around the lakes. This had been performed so slowly, that it consumed a week; two nights of which had been passed in the same quarters, from the absolute necessity of rest. It was not, therefore, till the 7th of July, that they reached the heights commanding the plains which stretched far away towards the territory of Tlascala, in full view of the venerable pyramids of Teotihuacan, two of the most remarkable monuments of the antique American civilization now existing north of the Isthmus. During all the preceding day

away by the advice of Cortés. "The devil take your gold," said the commander bluntly to him, "if it is to cost you your life." Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 11.

[6] Gomara, Crónica, cap. 110.

[7] The meaning of the word *Tlascala*, and so called from the abundance of maize raised in the country. Boturini, Idea, p. 78.

[8] "Empero la Nacion nuestra Española sufre mas hambre que otra ninguna, i estos de Cortés mas que todos." Gomara, Crónica, cap. 110.

they had seen parties of the enemy hovering like dark clouds above the highlands, brandishing their weapons, and calling out in vindictive tones, "Hasten on! You will soon find yourselves where you cannot escape!" words of mysterious import, which they were made fully to comprehend on the following morning.[9]

The monuments of San Juan Teotihuacan are, with the exception of the temple of Cholula, the most ancient remains, probably, on the Mexican soil. They were found by the Aztecs, according to their traditions, on their entrance into the country, when Teotihuacan, *the habitation of the gods*, now a paltry village, was a flourishing city, the rival of Tula, the great Toltec capital.[10] The two principal pyramids were dedicated to *Tonatiuh*, the Sun, and *Meztli*, the Moon. The former, which is considerably the larger, is found by recent measurements to be six hundred and eighty-two feet long at the base, and one hundred and eighty feet high, dimensions not inferior to those of some of the kindred monuments of Egypt.[11] They were divided into four stories, of which three are now discernible, while the vestiges of the intermediate gradations are nearly effaced. In fact, time has dealt so roughly with them, and the materials have been so much displaced by the treacherous vegetation of the tropics, muffling up with its flowery mantle the ruin which it causes, that it is not easy to discern, at once, the pyramidal form of the structures.[12] The huge masses bear such resemblance to the North American mounds, that some have fancied them to be only natural eminences shaped by the hand of man

[9] For the concluding pages, see Camargo, Hist. de Tlascala, MS.,—Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 128,—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 13,—Gomara, Crónica, ubi supra,—Ixtlilxochitl, Hist. Chich., MS., cap. 89,—Martyr, de Orbe Novo, dec. 5, cap. 6,—Rel. Seg. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, pp. 147, 148,—Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva España, MS., lib. 12, cap. 25, 26.

[10] "Su nombre, que quiere decir *habitacion de los Dioses*, y que ya por estos tiempos era ciudad tan famosa, que no solo competia, pero excedia con muchas ventajas á la corte de Tollan." Veytia, Hist. Antig., tom. I. cap. 27.

[11] The Pyramid of Mycerimos is 280 feet only at the base, and 162 feet in height. The great pyramid of Cheops is 728 feet at the base, and 448 feet high. See Denon, Egypt Illustrated, (London, 1825,) p. 9.

[12] "It requires a particular position," says Mr. Tudor, "united with some little faith, to discover the pyramidal form at all." (Tour in North America, vol. II. p. 277.) Yet Mr. Bullock says, "The general figure of the square is as perfect as the great pyramid of Egypt." (Six Months in Mexico, vol. II. chap. 26.) Eyewitnesses both! The historian must often content himself with repeating, in the words of the old French lay,—

"*Si com je l'ai trove escrite,*
Vos conterai la verité."

into a regular form, and ornamented with the temples and terraces, the wreck of which still covers their slopes. But others, seeing no example of a similar elevation in the wide plain in which they stand, infer, with more probability, that they are wholly of an artificial construction.

The interior is composed of clay mixed with pebbles, incrusted on the surface with the light porous stone *tetzontli*, so abundant in the neighboring quarries. Over this was a thick coating of stucco, resembling, in its reddish color, that found in the ruins of Palenque. According to tradition, the pyramids are hollow, but hitherto the attempt to discover the cavity in that dedicated to the Sun has been unsuccessful. In the smaller mound, an aperture has been found on the southern side, at two thirds of the elevation. It is formed by a narrow gallery, which, after penetrating to the distance of several yards, terminates in two pits or wells. The largest of these is about fifteen feet deep;[14] and the sides are faced with unbaked bricks; but to what purpose it was devoted, nothing is left to show. It may have been to hold the ashes of some powerful chief, like the solitary apartment discovered in the great Egyptian pyramid. That these monuments were dedicated to religious uses, there is no doubt; and it would be only conformable to the practice of Antiquity in the eastern continent, that they should have served for tombs, as well as temples.[15]

Distinct traces of the latter destination are said to be visible on the summit of the smaller pyramid, consisting of the remains of stone walls showing a building of considerable size and strength.[16] There are no remains on the top of the pyramid of the Sun. But the traveller, who will take the trouble to ascend its bald summit, will be amply compensated by the glorious view it will open to him;—towards the south-east, the hills of Tlascala, surrounded by their green plantations and cultivated corn-fields, in the midst of which stands the little village, once

[13] This is M. de Humboldt's opinion. (See his Essai Politique, tom. II. pp. 66–70.) He has also discussed these interesting monuments in his Vues des Cordillères, p. 25. et seq.

[14] Latrobe gives the description of this cavity, into which he and his fellow-travellers penetrated. Rambler in Mexico, let. 7.

[15] "Et tot templa deum Romæ, quot in urbe sepulcra
Heroum numerare licet: quos fabula manes
Nobilitat, noster populus veneratus adorat."
PRUDENTIUS, Contra Sym., lib. 1.

[16] The dimensions are given by Bullock, (Six Months in Mexico, vol. II. chap. 26,) who has sometimes seen what has eluded the optics of other travellers.

the proud capital of the republic. Somewhat further to the south, the eye passes across the beautiful plains lying around the city of Puebla de los Angeles, founded by the old Spaniards and still rivalling, in the splendor of its churches, the most brilliant capitals of Europe; and far in the west he may behold the Valley of Mexico, spread out like a map, with its diminished lakes, its princely capital rising in still greater glory from its ruins, and its rugged hills gathering darkly around it, as in the days of Montezuma.

The summit of this larger mound is said to have been crowned by a temple, in which was a colossal statue of its presiding deity, the Sun, made of one entire block of stone, and facing the east. Its breast was protected by a plate of burnished gold and silver, on which the first rays of the rising luminary rested.[17] An antiquary, in the early part of the last century, speaks of having seen some fragments of the statue. It was still standing, according to report, on the invasion of the Spaniards, and was demolished by the indefatigable Bishop Zumarraga, whose hand fell more heavily than that of Time itself on the Aztec monuments.[18]

Around the principal pyramids are a great number of smaller ones, rarely exceeding thirty feet in height, which, according to tradition, were dedicated to the stars, and served as sepulchres for the great men of the nation. They are arranged symmetrically in avenues terminating at the sides of the great pyramids, which face the cardinal points. The plain on which they stand was called *Micoatl*, or "Path of the Dead." The laborer, as he turns up the ground, still finds their numerous arrow-heads, and blades of obsidian, attesting the warlike character of its primitive population.[19]

What thoughts must crowd on the mind of the traveller, as he wanders amidst these memorials of the past; as he treads over the ashes of the generations who reared these colossal fabrics, which take us from the present into the very depths of time! But who were their builders? Was it the shadowy Olmecs, whose history, like that of the ancient Titans, is lost in the mists of fable? or, as commonly reported, the peaceful and industrious Toltecs, of whom all that we can glean rests on traditions hardly

[17] Such is the account given by the cavalier Boturini. Idea, pp. 42, 43.

[18] Both Ixtlilxochitl and Boturini, who visited these monuments, one, early in the seventeenth, the other, in the first part of the eighteenth century, testify to their having seen the remains of this statue. They had entirely disappeared by 1757, when Veytia examined the pyramid. Hist. Antig., tom. I. cap. 26.

[19] "Agricola, incurvo terram molitus aratro,
Exesa inveniet scabra rubigine pila" &c.
GEORG., lib. I.

more secure? What has become of the races who built them? Did they remain on the soil, and mingle and become incorporated with the fierce Aztecs who succeeded them? Or did they pass on to the South, and find a wider field for the expansion of their civilization, as shown by the higher character of the architectural remains in the distant regions of Central America and Yucatan? It is all a mystery,—over which Time has thrown an impenetrable veil, that no mortal hand may raise. A nation has passed away,—powerful, populous, and well advanced in refinement, as attested by their monuments,—but it has perished without a name. It has died and made no sign!

Such speculations, however, do not seem to have disturbed the minds of the Conquerors, who have not left a single line respecting these time-honored structures, though they passed in full view of them,—perhaps, under their very shadows. In the sufferings of the present, they had little leisure to bestow on the past. Indeed, the new and perilous position, in which at this very spot they found themselves, must naturally have excluded every other thought from their bosoms, but that of self-preservation.

As the army was climbing the mountain steeps which shut in the Valley of Otompan, the videttes came in with the intelligence, that a powerful body was encamped on the other side, apparently awaiting their approach. The intelligence was soon confirmed by their own eyes, as they turned the crest of the sierra, and saw spread out, below, a mighty host, filling up the whole depth of the valley, and giving to it the appearance, from the white cotton mail of the warriors, of being covered with snow.[20] It consisted of levies from the surrounding country, and especially the populous territory of Tezcuco, drawn together at the instance of Cuitlahua, Montezuma's successor, and now concentrated on this point to dispute the passage of the Spaniards. Every chief of note had taken the field with his whole array gathered under his standard, proudly displaying all the pomp and rude splendor of his military equipment. As far as the eye could reach, were to be seen shields and waving banners, fantastic helmets, forests of shining spears, the bright feather-mail of the chief, and the coarse cotton panoply of his follower, all mingled together in wild confusion, and tossing to and fro like the billows of a troubled ocean.[21] It was a sight to fill the stoutest heart among

[20] "Y como iban vestidos de blanco, parecia el campo nevado." Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 13.

[21] "Vistosa confusian," says Solís, "de armas y penachos, en que tenian su hermosura los horrores." (Conquista, lib. 4, cap. 20.) His painting shows the hand of a great artist,—which he certainly was. But he should not have put fire-arms into the hands of his countrymen on this occasion.

the Christians with dismay, heightened by the previous expectation of soon reaching the friendly land which was to terminate their wearisome pilgrimage. Even Cortés, as he contrasted the tremendous array before him with his own diminished squadrons, wasted by disease and enfeebled by hunger and fatigue, could not escape the conviction that his last hour had arrived.[22]

But his was not the heart to despond; and he gathered strength from the very extremity of his situation. He had no room for hesitation; for there was no alternative left to him. To escape was impossible. He could not retreat on the capital, from which he had been expelled. He must advance,—cut through the enemy, or perish. He hastily made his dispositions for the fight. He gave his force as broad a front as possible, protecting it on each flank by his little body of horse, now reduced to twenty. Fortunately, he had not allowed the invalids, for the last two days, to mount behind the riders, from a desire to spare the horses, so that these were now in tolerable condition; and, indeed, the whole army had been refreshed by halting, as we have seen, two nights and a day in the same place, a delay, however, which had allowed the enemy time to assemble in such force to dispute its progress.

Cortés instructed his cavaliers not to part with their lances, and to direct them at the face. The infantry were to thrust, not strike, with their swords; passing them, at once, through the bodies of their enemies. They were, above all, to aim at the leaders, as the general well knew how much depends on the life of the commander in the wars of barbarians, whose want of subordination makes them impatient of any control but that to which they are accustomed.

He then addressed to his troops a few words of encouragement, as customary with him on the eve of an engagement. He reminded them of the victories they had won with odds nearly as discouraging as the present; thus establishing the superiority of science and discipline over numbers. Numbers, indeed, were of no account, where the arm of the Almighty was on their side. And he bade them have full confidence, that He, who had carried them safely through so many perils, would not now abandon them and his own good cause, to perish by the hand of the infidel. His address was brief, for he read in their looks that settled resolve which rendered words unnecessary. The circumstances of their position spoke more forcibly to the heart of every soldier than any eloquence could have done, filling it with that feeling of desperation, which makes the weak arm strong, and

[22] "Y cierto creímos ser aquel el ultimo de nuestros dias." Rel. Seg. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 148.

turns the coward into a hero. After they had earnestly commended themselves, therefore, to the protection of God, the Virgin, and St. James, Cortés led his battalions straight against the enemy.[23]

It was a solemn moment,—that, in which the devoted little band, with steadfast countenances, and their usual intrepid step, descended on the plain, to be swallowed up, as it were, in the vast ocean of their enemies. The latter rushed on with impetuosity to meet them, making the mountains ring to their discordant yells and battle-cries, and sending forth volleys of stones and arrows which for a moment shut out the light of day. But, when the leading files of the two armies closed, the superiority of the Christians was felt, as their antagonists, falling back before the charges of cavalry, were thrown into confusion by their own numbers who pressed on them from behind. The Spanish infantry followed up the blow, and a wide lane was opened in the ranks of the enemy, who, receding on all sides, seemed willing to allow a free passage for their opponents. But it was to return on them with accumulated force, as rallying they poured upon the Christians, enveloping the little army on all sides, which, with its bristling array of long swords and javelins, stood firm,—in the words of a contemporary,—like an islet against which the breakers, roaring and surging, spend their fury in vain.[24] The struggle was desperate of man against man. The Tlascalan seemed to renew his strength, as he fought almost in view of his own native hills; as did the Spaniard, with the horrible doom of the captive before his eyes. Well did the cavaliers do their duty on that day; charging, in little bodies of four or five abreast, deep into the enemy's ranks, riding over the broken files, and by this temporary advantage giving strength and courage to the infantry. Not a lance was there which did not reek with the blood of the infidel. Among the rest, the young captain Sandoval is particularly commemorated for his daring prowess. Managing his fiery steed with easy horsemanship, he darted, when least expected, into the thickest of the *mêlée*, overturning

[23] Camargo, Hist. de Tlascala, MS.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 14.—Bernal Diaz, Hist de la Conquista, cap. 128.—Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva España, MS., lib. 12, cap. 27.

Cortés might have addressed his troops, as Napoleon did his in the famous battle with the Mamelukes: "From yonder pyramids forty centuries look down upon you." But the situation of the Spaniards was altogether too serious for theatrical display.

[24] It is Sahagun's simile. "Estaban los Españoles como una Isleta en el mar, combatida de las olas por todas partes." (Hist. de Nueva España, MS., lib. 12, cap. 27.) The venerable missionary gathered the particulars of the action, as he informs us, from several who were present in it.

the stanchest warriors, and rejoicing in danger as if it were his natural element.[25]

But these gallant displays of heroism served only to ingulf the Spaniards deeper and deeper in the mass of the enemy, with scarcely any more chance of cutting their way through his dense and interminable battalions, than of hewing a passage with their swords through the mountains. Many of the Tlascalans and some of the Spaniards had fallen, and not one but had been wounded. Cortés himself had received a second cut on the head, and his horse was so much injured that he was compelled to dismount, and take one from the baggage train, a strong-boned animal, who carried him well through the turmoil of the day.[26] The contest had now lasted several hours. The sun rode high in the heavens, and shed an intolerable fervor over the plain. The Christians, weakened by previous sufferings, and faint with loss of blood, began to relax in their desperate exertions. Their enemies, constantly supported by fresh relays from the rear, were still in good heart, and, quick to perceive their advantage, pressed with redoubled force on the Spaniards. The horse fell back, crowded on the foot; and the latter, in vain seeking a passage amidst the dusky throngs of the enemy, who now closed up the rear, were thrown into some disorder. The tide of battle was setting rapidly against the Christians. The fate of the day would soon be decided; and all that now remained for them seemed to be to sell their lives as dearly as possible.

At this critical moment, Cortés, whose restless eye had been roving round the field in quest of any object that might offer him the means of arresting the coming ruin, rising in his stirrups, descried at a distance, in the midst of the throng, the chief who from his dress and military *cortége* he knew must be the commander of the barbarian forces. He was covered with

[25] The epic bard Ercilla's spirited portrait of the young warrior Tucapél may apply without violence to Sandoval, as described by the Castilian chroniclers.

> Cubierto Tucapel de fina malla
> salto como un ligero y suelto pardo
> en medio de la timida canalla,
> haciendo plaza el barbaro gallardo:
> con silvos grita en desigual batalla:
> con piedra, palo, flecha, lanza y dado
> le persigue la gente de manera
> como si fuera toro, ó brava fiera."
>
> LA ARAUCANA, Parte 1, canto 6.

[26] Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 13.
"Este caballo harriero," says Camargo, "le sirvió en la conquista de Méjico, y en la ultima guerra que se dió se le matáron." Hist. de Tlascala, MS.

a rich surcoat of feather-work; and a panache of beautiful plumes, gorgeously set in gold and precious stones, floated above his head. Rising above this, and attached to his back, between the shoulders, was a short staff bearing a golden net for a banner,—the singular, but customary, symbol of authority for an Aztec commander. The cacique whose name was Cihuaca, was born on a litter, and a body of young warriors, whose gay and ornamented dresses showed them to be the flower of the Indian nobles, stood round as a guard of his person and the sacred emblem.

The eagle eye of Cortés no sooner fell on this personage, than it lighted up with triumph. Turning quickly round to the cavaliers at his side, among whom were Sandoval, Olid, Alvarado, and Avila, he pointed out the chief, exclaiming, "There is our mark! Follow and support me!" Then crying his war-cry, and striking his iron heel into his weary steed, he plunged headlong into the thickest of the press. His enemies fell back, taken by surprise and daunted by the ferocity of the attack. Those who did not were pierced through with his lance, or borne down by the weight of his charger. The cavaliers followed close in the rear. On they swept, with the fury of a thunderbolt, cleaving the solid ranks asunder, strewing their path with the dying and the dead, and bounding over every obstacle in their way. In a few minutes they were in the presence of the Indian commander, and Cortés, overturning his supporters, sprung forward with the strength of a lion, and, striking him through with his lance, hurled him to the ground. A young cavalier, Juan de Salamanca, who had kept close by his general's side, quickly dismounted and despatched the fallen chief. Then tearing away his banner, he presented it to Cortés, as a trophy to which he had the best claim.[27] It was all the work of a moment. The guard, overpowered by the suddenness of the onset, made little resistance, But, flying, communicated their own panic to their comrades. The tidings of the loss soon spread over the field. The Indians, filled with consternation, now thought only of escape. In their blind terror, their numbers augmented their confusion. They trampled on one another, fancying it was the enemy in their rear.[28]

[27] The brave cavalier was afterwards permitted by the Emperor Charles V. to assume this trophy on his own escutcheon, in commemoration of his exploit. Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 128.

[28] The historians all concur in celebrating this glorious achievement of Cortés; who, concludes Gomara, "by his single arm saved the whole army from destruction." See Crónica. cap. 110.—Also, Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva España, MS., lib. 12, cap. 27.—Camargo, Hist. de Tlascala, MS.—Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 128.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib.

The Spaniards and Tlascaians were not slow to avail themselves of the marvellous change in their affairs. Their fatigue, their wounds, hunger, thirst, all were forgotten in the eagerness for vengeance; and they followed up the flying foe, dealing death at every stroke, and taking ample retribution for all they had suffered in the bloody marshes of Mexico.[29] Long did they pursue, till, the enemy having abandoned the field, they returned sated with slaughter to glean the booty which he had left. It was great, for the ground was covered with the bodies of chiefs, at whom the Spaniards, in obedience to the general's instructions, had particularly aimed; and their dresses displayed all the barbaric pomp of ornament, in which the Indian warrior delighted.[30] When his men had thus indemnified themselves, in some degree, for their late reverses, Cortés called them again under their banners; and, after offering up a grateful acknowledgment to the Lord of Hosts for their miraculous preservation, [31] they renewed their march across the now deserted valley. The sun was declining in the heavens, but, before the shades of evening had gathered around, they reached an Indian temple on an eminence, which afforded a strong and commodious position for the night.

Such was the famous battle of Otompan,—or Otumba, as commonly called, from the Spanish corruption of the name. It was fought on the 8th of July, 1520. The whole amount of the Indian force is reckoned by Castilian writers at two hundred

33, cap. 47.—Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 13.—Ixtlilxochitl, Hist. Chich., MS., cap. 89.

The brief and extremely modest notice of the affair in the general's own letter forms a beautiful contrast to the style of panegyric by others. "E con este trabajo fuímos mucha parte de el dia, hasta que quiso Dios, que murió una Persona de ellos, que debia ser tan Principal, que con su muerte cesó toda aquella Guerra." Rel. Seg., ap. Lorenzana, p. 148.

[29] "Pues á nosotros," says the doughty Captain Diaz, "no nos dolian las heridas, ni teniamos hambre, ni sed, sino que parecia que no auiamos auido, ni passado ningun mal trabajo. Seguímos la vitoria matando, é hiriendo. Pues nuestros amigos los de Tlascala estavan hechos vnos leones, y con sus espadas, y montantes, y otras armas que all; apañaron, hazíanlo muy biẽ y esforçadamente." Hist. de la Conquista, loc. cit.

[30] Ibid., ubi supra.

[31] The belligerent apostle St. James, riding, as usual, his milkwhite courser, came to the rescue on this occasion; an event commemorated by the dedication of a hermitage to him, in the neighborhood. (Camargo, Hist. de Tlascala.) Diaz, a skeptic on former occasions, admits his indubitable appearance on this. (Ibid., ubi supra.) According to the Tezcucan chronicler, he was supported by the Virgin and St. Peter. (Hist. Chich., MS., cap. 89.) Voltaire sensibly remarks, "Ceux qui ont fait les relations de ces étranges événemens les ont voulu relever par des miracles, qui ne servent en effet qu'à les rabaisser. Le vrai miracle fut la conduite de Cortés." Voltaire, Essai sur les Mœurs, chap. 147.

thousand! that of the slain at twenty thousand! Those who admit the first part of the estimate will find no difficulty in receiving the last.[82] It is about as difficult to form an accurate calculation of the numbers of a disorderly savage multitude, as of the pebbles on the beach, or the scattered leaves in autumn. Yet it was, undoubtedly, one of the most remarkable victories ever achieved in the New World. And this, not merely on account of the disparity of the forces, but of their unequal condition. For the Indians were in all their strength, while the Christians were wasted by disease, famine, and long protracted sufferings; without cannon or fire-arms, and deficient in the military apparatus which had so often struck terror into their barbarian foe,—deficient even in the terrors of a victorious name. But they had discipline on their side, desperate resolve, and implicit confidence in their commander. That they should have triumphed against such odds furnishes an inference of the same kind as that established by the victories of the European over the semi-civilized hordes of Asia.

Yet even here all must not be referred to superior discipline and tactics. For the battle would certainly have been lost, had it not been for the fortunate death of the Indian general. And, although the selection of the victim may be called the result of calculation, yet it was by the most precarious chance that he was thrown in the way of the Spaniards. It is, indeed, one among many examples of the influence of fortune in determining the fate of military operations. The star of Cortés was in the ascendant. Had it been otherwise, not a Spaniard would have survived that day, to tell the bloody tale of the battle of Otumba.

[82] See Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 47.—Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 13.—Gomara, Córnica cap. 110.

CHAPTER V.

ARRIVAL IN TLASCALA.—FRIENDLY RECEPTION.—DISCONTENTS OF THE ARMY.—JEALOUSY OF THE TLASCALANS.—EMBASSY MEXICO.

1520.

ON the following morning, the army broke up its encampment at an early hour. The enemy do not seem to have made an attempt to rally. Clouds of skirmishers, however, were seen during the morning, keeping at a respectful distance, though occasionally venturing near enough to salute the Spaniards with a volley of missiles.

On a rising ground they discovered a fountain, a blessing not too often met with in these arid regions, and gratefully commemorated by the Christians, for the refreshment afforded by its cool and abundant waters.[1] A little further on they descried the rude works which served as the bulwark and boundary of the Tlascalan territory. At the sight, the allies sent up a joyous shout of congratulation, in which the Spaniards heartily joined, as they felt they were soon to be on friendly and hospitable ground.

But these feelings were speedily followed by others of a different nature: and, as they drew nearer the territory, their minds were disturbed with the most painful apprehensions as to their reception by the people among whom they were bringing desolation and mourning, and who might so easily, if ill-disposed, take advantage of their present crippled condition. "Thoughts like these," says Cortés, "weighed as heavily on my spirit as any which I ever experienced in going to battle with the Aztecs."[2]

[1] Is it not the same fountain of which Toribio makes honorable mention in his topographical account of the country? "Nace en Tlaxcala una fuente grande á la parte del Norte, cinco leguas de la principal ciudad; nace en un pueblo que se llama Azumba, que en su lengua quiere decir *cabeza*, y así es, porque esta fuente es cabeza y principio del mayor rio de los que entran en la mar del Sur, el cual entra en la mar por Zacatula." Hist. de los Indios, MS., Parte 3, cap. 16.

[2] "El qual pensamiento, y sospecha nos puso en tanta afliccion, quanta trahiamos viniendo peleando con los de Culúa." Rel. Seg. de Cortés. ap. Lorenzana, p. 149.

Still he put, as usual, a good face on the matter, and encouraged his men to confide in their allies, whose past conduct had afforded every ground for trusting to their fidelity in future. He cautioned them, however, as their own strength was so much impaired, to be most careful to give no umbrage, or ground for jealousy, to their high-spirited allies. "Be but on your guard," continued the intrepid general, "and we have still stout hearts and strong hands to carry us through the midst of them!"[3] With these anxious surmises, bidding adieu to the Aztec domain, the Christian army crossed the frontier, and once more trod the soil of the Republic.

The first place at which they halted was the town of Huejotlipan, a place of about twelve or fifteen thousand inhabitants.[4] They were kindly greeted by the people, who came out to receive them, inviting the troops to their habitations, and administering all the relief of their simple hospitality. Yet this was not so disinterested, according to some of the Spaniards, as to prevent their expecting in requital a share of the plunder taken in the late action.[5] Here the weary forces remained two or three days, when the news of their arrival having reached the capital, not more than four or five leagues distant, the old chief, Maxixca, their efficient friend on their former visit, and Xicotencatl, the young warrior, who, it will be remembered, had commanded the troops of his nation in their bloody encounters with the Spaniards, came with a numerous concourse of the citizens to welcome the fugitives to Tlascala. Maxixca, cordially embracing the Spanish commander, testified the deepest sympathy for his misfortunes. That the white men could so long have withstood the confederated power of the Aztecs was proof enough of their marvellous prowess. "We have made common cause together," said the lord of Tlascala, "and we have common injuries to avenge; and, come weal or come woe, be assured we will prove true and loyal friends, and stand by you to the death."[6]

This cordial assurance and sympathy, from one who exercised

[3] "Y mas dixo, que tenia esperança en Dios que los hallariamos buenos, y leales; é que si otra cosa fuesse, lo que Dios no permita, que nos han de torna á andar los puños con coraçones fuertes, y braços vigorosos, y que para esso fuessemos muy apercibidos." Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 128.

[4] Called Gualipan by Cortés. (Ibid., p. 149.) An Aztec would have found it hard to trace the route of his enemies by their itineraries.

[5] Ibid., ubi supra.

Thoan Cano, however, one of the army, denies this, and asserts that the natives received them like their children, and would take no recompense. (See *Appendix Part* 2, *No.* 11.)

[6] "Y que tubiesse por cierto, que me serian muy ciertos, y verdaderos amigos, hasta la muerte." Rel. Seg. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 150.

a control over the public counsels beyond any other ruler, effectually dispelled the doubts that lingered in the mind of Cortés. He readily accepted his invitation to continue his march, at once, to the capital, where he would find so much better accommodations for his army, than in a small town on the frontier. The sick and wounded, placed in hammocks, were borne on the shoulders of the friendly natives ; and, as the troops drew near the city, the inhabitants came flocking out in crowds to meet them, rending the air with joyous acclamations, and wild bursts of their rude Indian minstrelsy. Amidst the general jubilee, however, were heard sounds of wailing and sad lament, as some unhappy relative or friend, looking earnestly into the diminished files of their countrymen, sought in vain for some dear and familiar countenance, and, as they turned disappointed away, gave utterance to their sorrow in tones that touched the heart of every soldier in the army. With these mingled accompaniments of joy and woe,—the motley web of human life,—the way-worn columns of Cortés at length reëntered the republican capital.[7]

The general and his suite were lodged in the rude, but spacious, palace of Maxixca. The rest of the army took up their quarters in the district over which the Tlascalan lord presided. Here they continued several weeks, until, by the attentions of the hospitable citizens, and such medical treatment as their humble science could supply, the wounds of the soldiers were healed, and they recovered from the debility to which they had been reduced by their long and unparalleled sufferings. Cortés was one of those who suffered severely. He lost the use of two of the fingers of his left hand.[8] He had received, besides, two injuries on the head ; one of which was so much exasperated by his subse-

[7] Camargo, Hist. de Tlascala, MS.—Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, ubi supra.—"Sobreviniéron las mugeres Tlascaltecas, y todas puestas de luto, y llorando á donde estaban los Españoles, las unas preguntaban por sus maridos, las otras por sus hijos y hermanos, las otras por sus parientes que habian ido con los Españoles, y quedaban todos allá muertos: no es menos, sino que de esto llanto causó gran sentimiento en el corazon del Capitan, y de todos los Españoles, y él procuró lo mejor que pudo consolarles por medio de sus Intérpretes." Sahagun, Hist. de Neuva España, MS., lib. 12, cap. 28.

[8] "Yo assimismo quedé manco de dos dedos de la mano izquierda."—is Cortés own expression in his letter to the emperor. (Rel. Seg., ap. Lorenzana, p. 152.) Don Thoan Cano, however, whose sympathies—from his Indian alliance, perhaps—seem to have been quite as much with the Aztecs as with his own countrymen, assured Oviedo, who was lamenting the general's loss, that he might spare his regrets, since Cortés had as many fingers on his hand at that hour, as when he came from Castile. (See *Appendix*, *Part* 2, *No.* 11.) May not the word *manco*, in his letter, be rendered by "maimed"?

quent fatigues and excitement of mind, that it assumed an alarming appearance. A part of the bone was obliged to be removed.[9] A fever ensued, and for several days the hero, who had braved danger and death in their most terrible forms, lay stretched on his bed, as helpless as an infant. His excellent constitution, however, got the better of disease, and he was, at length, once more enabled to resume his customary activity.—The Spaniards, with politic generosity, requited the hospitality of their hosts by sharing with them the spoils of their recent victory, and Cortés especially rejoiced the heart of Maxixca, by presenting him with the military trophy which he had won from the Indian commander.[10]

But while the Spaniards were thus recruiting their health and spirits under the friendly treatment of their allies, and recovering the confidence and tranquillity of mind which had sunk under their hard reverses, they received tidings, from time to time, which showed that their late disaster had not been confined to the Mexican capital. On his descent from Mexico to encounter Narvaez, Cortés had brought with him a quantity of gold, which he left for safe keeping at Tlascala. To this was added a considerable sum, collected by the unfortunate Velasquez de Leon, in his expedition to the coast, as well as contributions from other sources. From the unquiet state of the capital, the general thought it best, on his return there, still to leave the treasure under the care of a number of invalid soldiers, who, when in marching condition, were to rejoin him in Mexico. A party from Vera Cruz, consisting of five horsemen and forty foot, had since arrived at Tlascala, and, taking charge of the invalids and treasure, undertook to escort them to the capital. He now learned that they had been intercepted on the route, and all cut off, with the entire loss of the treasure. Twelve other soldiers, marching in the same direction, had been massacred in the neighboring province of Tepeaca; and accounts continually arrived of some unfortunate Castilian, who, presuming on the respect hitherto shown to his countrymen, and ignorant of the disasters in the capital, had fallen a victim to the fury of the enemy.[11]

[9] "Hiriéron á Cortés con Honda tan mal, que se le pasmó la Cabeça, ó porque no le curáron bien, sacándole Cascos, ó por el demasiado trabajo que pasó," Gomara, Crónica, cap. 110.

[10] Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 13—Bernal Diaz, Ibid., ubi supra.

[11] Rel. Seg. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 150.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 15.

Herrera gives the following inscription, cut on the bark of a tree by some of these unfortunate Spaniards. "By this road passed Juan Juste and his

These dismal tidings filled the mind of Cortés with gloomy apprehensions for the fate of the settlement at Villa Rica,—the last stay of their hopes. He despatched a trusty messenger, at once, to that place; and had the inexpressible satisfaction to receive a letter in return from the commander of the garrison, acquainting him with the safety of the colony, and its friendly relations with the neighboring Totonacs. It was the best guaranty of the fidelity of the latter, that they had offended the Mexicans too deeply to be forgiven.

While the affairs of Cortés wore so gloomy an aspect without, he had to experience an annoyance scarcely less serious from the discontents of his followers. Many of them had fancied that their late appalling reverses would put an end to the expedition; or, at least, postpone all thoughts of resuming it for the present. But they knew little of Cortés who reasoned thus. Even while tossing on his bed of sickness, he was ripening in his mind fresh schemes for retrieving his honor, and for recovering the empire which had been lost more by another's rashness than his own. This was apparent, as he became convalescent, from the new regulations he made respecting the army, as well as from the orders sent to Vera Cruz for fresh reinforcements.

The knowledge of all this occasioned much disquietude to the disaffected soldiers. They were, for the most part, the ancient followers of Narvaez, on whom, as we have seen, the brunt of the war had fallen the heaviest. Many of them possessed property in the Islands, and had embarked on this expedition chiefly from the desire of increasing it. But they had gathered neither gold nor glory in Mexico. Their present service filled them only with disgust; and the few, comparatively, who had been so fortunate as to survive, languished to return to their rich mines and pleasant farms in Cuba, bitterly cursing the day when they had left them.

Finding their complaints little heeded by the general, they prepared a written remonstrance, in which they made their demand more formally. They represented the rashness of persisting in the enterprise in his present impoverished state, without arms or ammunition, almost without men; and this, too, against a powerful enemy, who had been more than a match for him with all the strength of his late resources. It was madness to think of is. The attempt would bring them all to the sacrifice-block. Their only course was to continue their

wretched companions, who were so much pinched by hunger, that they were obliged to give a solid bar of gold, weighing eight hundred ducats, for a few cakes of maize bread." Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 13.

march to Vera Cruz. Every hour of delay might be fatal. The garrison in that place might be overwhelmed from want of strength to defend itself; and thus their last hope would be anihilated. But, once there, they might wait in comparative security for such reinforcements as would join them from abroad; while in case of failure they could the more easily make their escape. They concluded, with insisting on being permitted to return, at once, to the port of Villa Rica. This petition, or rather remonstrance, was signed by all the disaffected soldiers, and, after being formally attested by the royal notary, was presented to Cortés.[12]

It was a trying circumstance for him. What touched him most nearly was, to find the name of his friend, the secretary Duero, to whose good offices he had chiefly owed his command, at the head of the paper. He was not, however, to be shaken from his purpose for a moment; and while all outward resources seemed to be fading away, and his own friends faltered, or failed him, he was still true to himself. He knew that to retreat to Vera Cruz would be to abandon the enterprise. Once there, his army would soon find a pretext and a way for breaking up and returning to the Islands. All his ambitious schemes would be blasted. The great prize, already once in his grasp, would then be lost forever. He would be a ruined man.

In his celebrated letter to Charles the Fifth, he says, that, in reflecting on his position, he felt the truth of the old adage, "that fortune favors the brave. The Spaniards were the followers of the Cross; and trusting in the infinite goodness and mercy of God, he could not believe that He would suffer them and his own good cause thus to perish among the heathen.[13] He was resolved, therefore, not to descend to the coast, but at all hazards to retrace his steps and beard the enemy again in his capital."

It was in the same resolute tone that he answered his discontented followers.[14] He urged every argument which could

[12] One is reminded of the similar remonstrance made by Alexander's soldiers to him, on reaching the Hystaspis,—but attended with more success; as, indeed, was reasonable. For Alexander continued to advance from the ambition of indefinite conquest, while Cortés was only bent on carrying out his original enterprise. What was madness in the one was heroism in the other.

[13] "Acordándome, que siempre á los osados ayuda la fortuna, y que eramos Christianos y confiando en la grandíssima Bondad, y Misericordia de Dios, que no permitiria, que del todo pereciessemos, y se perdiesse tanta, y tan noble Tierra." Rel. Seg., ap Lorenzana, p. 152.

[14] This reply, exclaims Oviedo, showed a man of unconquerable spirit, and high destinies. "Paréceme que la respuesta que á esto les dió Hernando Cortés, é lo que hizo en ello, fué vna cosa de ánimo invencible, é de varon de mucha suerte é valor." Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib, 33, cap. 15.

touch their pride or honor as cavaliers. He appealed to that ancient Castilian valor which had never been known to falter before an enemy; besought them not to discredit the great deeds which had made their name ring throughout Europe; not to leave the emprise half achieved, for others more daring and adventurous to finish. How could they with any honor, he asked desert their allies whom they had involved in the war, and leave them unprotected to the vengeance of the Aztecs? To retreat but a single step towards Villa Rica would be to proclaim their own weakness. It would dishearten their friends, and give confidence to their foes. He implored them to resume the confidence in him which they had ever showed, and to reflect, that, if they had recently met with reverses, he had up to that point accomplished all, and more than all, that he had promised. It would be easy now to retrieve their losses, if they would have patience, and abide in this friendly land until the reinforcements, which would be ready to come in at his call, should enable them to act on the offensive. If, however, there were any so insensible to the motives which touch a brave man's heart, as to prefer ease at home, to the glory of this great achievement, he would not stand in their way. Let them go in God's name. Let them leave their general in his extremity. He should feel stronger in the service of a few brave spirits, than if surrounded by a host of the false or the faint-hearted.[15]

The disaffected party, as already noticed, was chiefly drawn from the troops of Narvaez. When the general's own veterans heard this appeal,[16] their blood warmed with indignation at the thoughts of abandoning him or the cause, at such a crisis. They pledged themselves to stand by him to the last; and the malcontents, silenced, if not convinced, by this generous expression of sentiment from their comrades, consented to postpone their departure for the present, under the assurance, that no obstacle should be thrown in their way, when a more favorable season should present itself.[17]

[15] "E no me hable ninguno en otra cosa; y él que desta opinion no estubiere váyase en buen hora, que mas holgaré de quedar con los pocos y osados que en compañía de muchos, ni de ninguno cobarde, ni desacordado de su propia honra." Hist. de las Ind., MS. loc. cit.

[16] Oviedo has expanded the harangue of Cortés into several pages, in the course of which the orator quotes Xenophon, and borrows largely from the old Jewish history, a style of eloquence savoring much more of the closet than the camp. Cortés was no pedant, and his soldiers were no scholars.

[17] For the account of this tubulent transaction, see Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 129,—Rel. Seg. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 152,—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 15,—Gomara, Crónica, cap. 112, 113,—Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 14.

Diaz is exceedingly wroth with the chaplain, Gomara, for not discriminat-

Scarcely was this difficulty adjusted, when Cortés was menaced with one more serious, in the jealousy springing up between his soldiers and their Indian allies. Notwithstanding the demonstrations of regard by Maxixca and his immediate followers, there were others of the nation who looked with an evil eye on their guests, for the calamities in which they had involved them; and they tauntingly asked, if, in addition to this, they were now to be burdened by the presence and maintenance of the strangers? These sallies of discontent were not so secret as altogether to escape the ears of the Spaniards, in whom they occasioned no little disquietude. They proceeded, for the most part, it is true, from persons of little consideration, since the four great chiefs of the republic appear to have been steadily secured to the interests of Cortés. But they derived some importance from the countenance of the warlike Xicotencatl, in whose bosom still lingered the embers of that implacable hostility which he had displayed so courageously on the field of battle; and sparkles of this fiery temper occasionally gleamed forth in the intimate intercourse into which he was now reluctantly brought with his ancient opponents.

Cortés, who saw, with alarm, the growing feelings of estrangement, which must sap the very foundations on which he was to rest the lever for future operations, employed every argument which suggested itself, to restore the confidence of his own men. He reminded them of the good services they had uniformly received from the great body of the nation. They had a sufficient pledge of the future constancy of the Tlascalans in their long cherished hatred of the Aztecs, which the recent disasters they had suffered from the same quarter could serve only to sharpen. And he urged with much force, that, if any evil designs had been meditated by them against the Spaniards, the Tlascalans would, doubtless, have taken advantage of their late disabled condition, and not waited till they had recovered their strength and means of resistance.[18]

While Cortés was thus endeavoring, with somewhat doubtful success to stifle his own apprehensions, as well as those in the bosoms of his followers, an event occurred which happily brought the affair to an issue, and permanently settled the relations in which the two parties were to stand to each other. This

ing between the old soldiers and the levies of Narvaez, whom he involves equally in the sin of rebellion. The captain's own version seems a fair one, and I have followed it, therefore, in the text.

[18] Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 15.—Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 14.—Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva España, MS., lib. 12, cap. 29.

will make it necessary to notice some events which had occurred in Mexico, since the expulsion of the Spaniards.

On Montezuma's death, his brother, Cuitlahua, lord of Iztapalapan, conformably to the usage regulating the descent of the Aztec crown, was chosen to succeed him. He was an active prince, of large experience in military affairs, and, by the strength of his character, was well fitted to sustain the tottering fortunes of the monarchy. He appears, moreover, to have been a man of liberal, and what may be called enlightened, taste, to judge from the beautiful gardens which he had filled with rare exotics, and which so much attracted the admiration of the Spaniards in his city of Iztapalapan. Unlike his predecessor, he held the white men in detestation; and had, probably, the satisfaction of celebrating his own coronation by the sacrifice of many of them. From the moment of his release from the Spanish quarters, where he had been detained by Cortés, he entered into the patriotic movements of his people. It was he who conducted the assaults both in the streets of the city, and on the "Melancholy Night"; and it was at his instigation, that the powerful force had been assembled to dispute the passage of the Spaniards in the Vale of Otumba.[19]

Since the evacuation of the capital, he had been busily occupied in repairing the mischief it had received,—restoring the buildings and the bridges, and putting it in the best posture of defence. He had endeavored to improve the discipline and arms of his troops. He introduced the long spear among them, and, by attaching the sword-blades taken from the Christians to long poles, contrived a weapon that should be formidable against the cavalry. He summoned his vassals, far and near, to hold themselves in readiness to march to the relief of the capital, if necessary, and, the better to secure their good-will, relieved them from some of the burdens usually laid on them. But he was now to experience the instability of a government which rested not on love, but on fear. The vassals in the neighborhood of the Valley remained true to their allegiance; but others held themselves aloof, uncertain what course to adopt; while others, again, in the more distant provinces, refused obedience

[19] Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 47.—Rel. Seg. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 166.—Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva España, MS., lib. 12, cap. 27, 29.

Or rather, it was "at the instigation of the great Devil, the captain of all the devils, called Satan, who regulated every thing in New Spain by his free will and pleasure, before the coming of the Spaniards," according to father Sahagun, who begins his chapter with this eloquent exordium.

altogether, considering this a favorable moment for throwing off the yoke which had so long galled them.[20]

In this emergency, the government sent a deputation to its ancient enemies, the Tlascalans. It consisted of six Aztec nobles, bearing a present of cotton cloth, salt, and other articles rarely seen, of late years, in the republic. The lords of the state, astonished at this unprecedented act of condescension in their ancient foe, called the council or senate of the great chiefs together, to give the envoys audience.

Before this body, the Aztecs stated the purpose of their mission. They invited the Tlascalans to bury all past grievances in oblivion, and to enter into a treaty with them. All the nations of Anahuac should make common cause in defence of their country against the white men. The Tlascalans would bring down on their own heads the wrath of the gods, if they longer harbored the strangers who had violated and destroyed their temples. If they counted on the support and friendship of their guests, let them take warning from the fate of Mexico, which had received them kindly within its walls, and which, in return, they had filled with blood and ashes. They conjured them, by their reverence for their common religion, not to suffer the white men, disabled as they now were, to escape from their hands, but to sacrifice them at once to the gods, whose temples they had profaned. In that event, they proffered them their alliance, and the renewal of that friendly traffic which would restore to the republic the possession of the comforts and luxuries of which it had been so long deprived.

The proposals of the ambassadors produced different effects on their audience. Xicotencatl was for embracing them at once. Far better was it, he said, to unite with their kindred, with those who held their own language, their faith and usages, than to throw themselves into the arms of the fierce strangers, who, however they might talk of religion, worshipped no god but gold. This opinion was followed by that of the younger warriors, who readily caught the fire of his enthusiasm. But the elder chiefs, especially his blind old father, one of the four rulers of the state, who seem to have been all heartily in the interests of the Spaniards, and one of them, Maxixca, their stanch friend, strongly expressed their aversion to the proposed alliance with the Aztecs. They were always the same, said the latter,—fair in speech, and false in heart. They now proffered friendship to the Tlascalans. But it was fear which drove them to it, and, when that fear was removed, they would return to their

[20] Ixtlilxochitl, Hist. Chich., MS., cap. 88.—Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva España, MS., lib 12, cap. 29.—Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 19.

old hostility. Who was it, but these insidious foes, that had so long deprived the country of the very necessaries of life, of which they were now so lavish in their offers? Was it not owing to the white men, that the nation at length possessed them? Yet they were called on to sacrifice the white men to the gods! —the warriors who, after fighting the battles of the Tlascalans, now threw themselves on their hospitality. But the gods abhorred perfidy. And were not their guests the very beings whose coming had been so long predicted by the oracles? Let us avail ourselves of it, he concluded, and unite and make common cause with them, until we have humbled our haughty enemy.

This discourse provoked a sharp rejoinder from Xicotencatl, till the passion of the elder chieftain got the better of his patience, and, substituting force for argument, he thrust his younger antagonist, with some violence, from the council chamber. A proceeding so contrary to the usual decorum of Indian debate astonished the assembly. But, far from bringing censure on its author, it effectually silenced opposition. Even the hot-headed followers of Xicotencatl shrunk from supporting a leader who had incurred such a mark of contemptuous displeasure from the ruler whom they most venerated. His own father openly condemned him; and the patriotic young warrior, gifted with a truer foresight into futurity than his countrymen, was left without support in the council, as he had formerly been on the field of battle.—The proffered alliance of the Mexicans was unanimously rejected; and the envoys, fearing that even the sacred character with which they were invested might not protect them from violence, made their escape secretly from the capital.[21]

The result of the conference was of the last importance to the Spaniards, who, in their present crippled condition, especially if taken unawares, would have been, probably, at the mercy of the Tlascalans. At all events, the union of these latter with the Aztecs would have settled the fate of the expedition; since, in the poverty of his own resources, it was only by adroitly playing off one part of the Indian population against the other, that Cortés could ultimately hope for success.

[21] The proceedings in the Tlascalan senate are reported in more or less detail, but substantially alike, by Camargo, Hist. de Tlascala, MS.,—Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva España, MS., lib. 12, cap. 29,—Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 12, cap. 14.

See, also, Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 129,—Gomara, Crónica, cap. 111.

CHAPTER VI.

WAR WITH THE SURROUNDING TRIBES.—SUCCESSES OF THE SPANIARDS.—DEATH OF MAXIXCA.—ARRIVAL OF REINFORCEMENTS.—RETURN IN TRIUMPH TO TLASCALA.

1520

THE Spanish commander, reassured by the result of the deliberations in the Tlascalan senate, now resolved on active operations, as the best means of dissipating the spirit of faction and discontent inevitably fostered by a life of idleness. He proposed to exercise his troops, at first, against some of the neighboring tribes who had laid violent hands on such of the Spaniards as, confiding in their friendly spirit, had passed through their territories. Among these were the Tepeacans, a people often engaged in hostility with the Tlascalans, and who, as mentioned in a preceding Chapter, had lately massacred twelve Spaniards in their march to the capital. An expedition against them would receive the ready support of his allies, and would assert the dignity of the Spanish name, much dimmed in the estimation of the natives by the late disasters.

The Tepeacans were a powerful tribe of the same primitive stock as the Aztecs, to whom they acknowledged allegiance. They had transferred this to the Spaniards, on their first march into the country, intimidated by the bloody defeats of their Tlascalan neighbors. But, since the troubles in the capital, they had again submitted to the Aztec sceptre. Their capital, now a petty village, was a flourishing city at the time of the Conquest, situated in the fruitful plains that stretch far away towards the base of Orizaba.[1] The province contained, moreover, several towns of considerable size, filled with a bold and warlike population.

As these Indians had once acknowledged the authority of Castile, Cortés and his officers regarded their present conduct

[1] The Indian name of the capital,—the same as that of the province,—*Tepejacac*, was corrupted by the Spaniards into *Tepeaca*. It must be admitted to have gained by the corruption.

in the light of rebellion, and, in a council of war, it was decided that those engaged in the late massacre had fairly incurred the doom of slavery.[2] Before proceeding against them, however, the general sent a summons requiring their submission, and offering full pardon for the past, but, in case of refusal, menacing them with the severest retribution. To this the Indians, now in arms, returned a contemptuous answer, challenging the Spaniards to meet them in fight, as they were in want of victims for their sacrifices.

Cortés, without further delay, put himself at the head of his small corps of Spaniards, and a large reinforcement of Tlascalan warriors. They were led by the younger Xicotencatl, who now appeared willing to bury his recent animosity, and desirous to take a lesson in war under the chief who had so often foiled him in the field.[3]

The Tepeacans received their enemy on their borders. A bloody battle followed, in which the Spanish horse were somewhat embarrassed by the tall maize that covered part of the plain. They were successful in the end, and the Tepeacans, after holding their ground like good warriors, were at length routed with great slaughter. A second engagement, which took place a few days after, was followed by like decisive results; and the victorious Spaniards with their allies, marching straightway on the city of Tepeaca, entered it in triumph.[4] No further resistance was attempted by the enemy, and the whole province, to avoid further calamities, eagerly tendered its submission. Cortés, however, inflicted the meditated chastisement on the places implicated in the massacre. The inhabitants were branded with a hot iron as slaves, and, after the royal fifth had been reserved, were distributed between his own men and the allies.[5] The Spaniards were familiar with the system of *repart-*

[2] "Y como aquello vió Cortés, comunicólo con todos nuestros Capitanes, y soldados : y fué acordado, que se hiziesse vn auto por ante Escriuano, que diesse fe de todo lo passado, y que se diessen por esclauos." Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 130.

[3] The chroniclers estimate his army at 50,000 warriors ; one half, according to Toribio, of the disposable military force of the republic. "De la cual, (Tlascala,) como ya tengo dicho, solian salir cien mil hombres de pelea." Hist. de los Indios, MS., Parte 3, cap. 16.

[4] "That night," says the credulous Herrera, speaking of the carouse that followed one of their victories, "the Indian allies had a grand supper of legs and arms ; for, besides an incredible number of roasts on wooden spits, they had fifty thousand pots of stewed human flesh!!" (Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 15.) Such a banquet would not have smelt savory in the nostrils of Cortés.

[5] "Y allí hiziéron hazer el hierro con que se auian de herrar los que se tomauan por esclauos, que era una G., que quiere decir *guerra*." Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 130.

imientos established in the Islands; but this was the first example of slavery in New Spain. It was justified, in the opinion of the general and his military casuists, by the aggravated offences of the party. The sentence, however, was not countenanced by the Crown,[6] which, as the colonial legislation abundantly shows, was ever at issue with the craving and mercenary spirit of the colonist.

Satisfied with this display of his vengeance, Cortés now established his headquarters at Tepeaca, which, situated in a cultivated country, afforded easy means for maintaining an army, while its position on the Mexican frontier made it a good *point d'appui* for future operations.

The Aztec government, since it had learned the issue of its negotiations at Tlascala, had been diligent in fortifying its frontier in that quarter. The garrisons usually maintained there were strengthened, and large bodies of men were marched in the same direction, with orders to occupy the strong positions on the borders. The conduct of these troops was in their usual style of arrogance and extortion, and greatly disgusted the inhabitants of the country.

Among the places thus garrisoned by the Aztecs was Quauhquechollan,[7] a city containing thirty thousand inhabitants, according to the historians, and lying to the south-west twelve leagues or more from the Spanish quarters. It stood at the extremity of a deep valley, resting against a bold range of hills, or rather, mountains, and flanked by two rivers with exceedingly high and precipitous banks. The only avenue, by which the town could be easily approached, was protected by a stone wall more than twenty feet high and of great thickness.[8] Into this place, thus strongly defended by art as well as by nature, the Aztec emperor had thrown a garrison of several thousand warriors, while a much more formidable force occupied the heights commanding the city.

The cacique of this strong post, impatient of the Mexican yoke, sent to Cortés, inviting him to march to his relief, and promising a coöperation of the citizens in an assault on the Aztec quarters. The general eagerly embraced the proposal, and

[6] Solis, Conquista, lib. 5, cap. 3.

[7] Called by the Spaniards *Huacachula*, and spelt with every conceivable diversity by the old writers, who may be excused for stumbling over such a confusion of consonants.

[8] "Y toda la Ciudad está cercada de muy fuerte Muro de cal y canto, tan alto, como quatro estados por de fuera de la Ciudad: é por de dentro está casi igual con el suelo. Y por toda la Muralla va su petril, tan alto, como medio estado, para pelear, tiene quatro entradas, tan anchas, como uno puede entrar á Caballo." Rel. Seg., p. 162.

detached Christóval de Olid, with two hundred Spaniards and a strong body of Tlascalans, to support the friendly cacique.[9] On the way, Olid was joined by many volunteers from the Indian city and from the neighboring capital of Cholula, all equally pressing their services. The number and eagerness of these auxiliaries excited suspicions in the bosom of the cavalier. They were strengthened by the surmises of the soldiers of Narvaez, whose imaginations were still haunted, it seems, by the horrors of the *noche triste*, and who saw in the friendly alacrity of their new allies evidence of an insidious understanding with the Aztecs. Olid, catching this distrust, made a countermarch on Cholula, where he seized the suspected chiefs, who had been most forward in offering their services, and sent them under a strong guard to Cortés.

The general, after a careful examination, was satisfied of the integrity of the suspected parties. He, expressing his deep regret at the treatment they had received, made them such amends as he could by liberal presents; and, as he now saw the impropriety of committing an affair of such importance to other hands, put himself at the head of his remaining force, and effected a junction with his officer in Cholula.

He had arranged with the cacique of the city against which he was marching, that, on the appearance of the Spaniards, the inhabitants should rise on the garrison. Everything succeeded as he had planned. No sooner had the Christian battalions defiled on the plain before the town, than the inhabitants attacked the garrison with the utmost fury. The latter, abandoning the outer defences of the place, retreated to their own quarters in the principal *teocalli*, where they maintained a hard struggle with their adversaries. In the heat of it, Cortés, at the head of his little body of horse, rode into the place, and directed the assault in person. The Aztecs made a fierce defence. But fresh troops constantly arriving to support the assailants, the works were stormed, and every one of the garrison was put to the sword.[10]

The Mexican forces, meanwhile, stationed on the neighboring eminences, had marched down to the support of their countrymen in the town, and formed in order of battle in the suburbs, where they were encountered by the Tlascalan levies. "They

[9] This cavalier's name is usually spelt Olid by the Chroniclers. In a copy of his own signature, I find it written Oli.

[10] "I should have been very glad to have taken some alive," says Cortés, "who could have informed me of what was going on in the great city, and who had been lord there since the death of Montezuma. But I succeeded in saving only one,—and he was more dead than alive." Rel. Seg. de Cortés. ap. Lorenzana, p. 159.

mustered," says Cortés, speaking of the enemy, "at least thirty thousand men, and it was a brave sight for the eye to look on,—such a beautiful array of warriors glistening with gold and jewels and variegated feather-work!"[11] The action was well-contested between the two Indian armies. The suburbs were set on fire, and, in the midst of the flames, Cortés and his squadrons, rushing on the enemy, at length broke their array; and compelled them to fall back in disorder into the narrow gorge of the mountain, from which they had lately descended. The pass was rough and precipitous. Spaniards and Tlascalans followed close in the rear, and the light troops, scaling the high wall of the valley, poured down on the enemy's flanks. The heat was intense, and both parties were so much exhausted by their efforts, that it was with difficulty, says the chronicler, that the one could pursue, or the other fly.[12] They were not too weary, however, to slay. The Mexicans were routed with terrible slaughter. They found no pity from their Indian foes, who had a long account of injuries to settle with them. Some few sought refuge by flying higher up into the fastnesses of the sierra. They were followed by their indefatigable enemy, until, on the bald summit of the ridge, they reached the Mexican encampment. It covered a wide tract of ground. Various utensils, ornamented dresses, and articles of luxury, were scattered round, and the number of slaves in attendance showed the barbaric pomp with which the nobles of Mexico went to their campaigns.[13] It was a rich booty for the victors, who spread over the deserted camp, and loaded themselves with the spoil, until the gathering darkness warned them to descend.[14]

[11] "Y á ver que cosa era aquella, los quales eran mas de treinta mil Hombres, y la mas lúcida Gente, que hemos visto, porque trahian muchas Joyas de Oro, y Plata, y Plumajes." Ibid., p. 160.

[12] "Alcanzando muchos por una Cuesta arriba muy agra; y tal, que quando acabámos de encumbrar la Sierra, ni los Enemigos, ni nosotros podiamos ir atras, ni adelante: é assí caiéron muchos de ellos muertos, y ahogados de la calor, sin herida ninguna." Ibid., p. 160.

[13] "Porque demas de la Gente de Guerra, tenian mucho aparato de Servidores, y fornecimiento para su Real." Ibid., p. 160.

[14] The story of the capture of this strong post is told very differently by Captain Diaz. According to him, Olid, when he had fallen back on Cholula, in consequence of the refusal of his men to advance, under the strong suspicion which they entertained of some foul practice from their allies, received such a stinging rebuke from Cortés, that he compelled his troops to resume their march, and, attacking the enemy, "with the fury of a tiger," totally routed them. (Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 132.) But this version of the affair is not endorsed, so far as I am aware, by any contemporary. Cortés is so compendious in his report, that it is often necessary to supply the omissions with the details of other writers. But where he is positive in his statements, —unless there be some reason to suspect a bias,—his practice of writing on

Cortés followed up the blow by assaulting the strong town of Itzocan, held, also, by a Mexican garrison, and situated in the depths of a green valley watered by artificial canals, and smiling in all the rich abundance of this fruitful region of the plateau.[15] The place, though stoutly defended, was stormed and carried; the Aztecs were driven across a river which ran below the town, and, although the light bridges that traversed it were broken down in the flight, whether by design or accident, the Spaniards, fording and swimming the stream as they could, found their way to the opposite bank, following up the chase with the eagerness of bloodhounds. Here, too, the booty was great; and the Indian auxiliaries flocked by thousands to the banners of the chief who so surely led them on to victory and plunder.[16]

Soon afterwards, Cortés returned to his headquarters at Tepeaca. Thence he detached his officers on expeditions which were usually successful. Sandoval, in particular, marched against a large body of the enemy lying between the camp and Vera Cruz; defeated them in two decisive battles, and thus restored the communications with the port.

The result of these operations was the reduction of that populous and cultivated territory which lies between the great *volcan*, on the west, and the mighty skirts of Orizaba, on the east. Many places, also, in the neighboring province of Mixtecapan acknowledged the authority of the Spaniards, and others from the remote region of Oaxaca sent to claim their protection. The conduct of Cortés towards his allies had gained him great credit for disinterestedness and equity. The Indian cities in the adjacent territory appealed to him, as their umpire, in their differences with one another, and cases of disputed succession in their governments were referred to his arbitration. By his discreet and moderate policy, he insensibly acquired an ascendency over their counsels, which had been denied to the ferocious Aztec. His authority extended wider and wider every day; and

the spot, and the peculiar facilities for information afforded by his position, make him decidedly the best authority.

[15] Cortés, with an eye less sensible to the picturesque than his great predecessor in the track of discovery, Columbus, was full as quick in detecting the capabilities of the soil. "Tiene un Valle redondo muy fertile de Frutas, y Algodon, que en ninguna parte de los Puertos arriba se hace por la gran frialdad: y allí es Tierra caliente y caúsalo, que está muy abrigada de Sierras; todo este Valle se riega por muy buenas Azequias, que tienen muy bien sacadas, y concertadas." Ibid., pp. 164, 165.

[16] So numerous, according to Cortés, that they covered hill and dale, as far as the eye could reach, mustering more than a hundred and twenty thousand strong! (Ibid., p. 162.) When the Conquerors attempt anything like a precise numeration, it will be as safe to substitute "a multitude" "a great force," &c., trusting the amount to the reader's own imagination.

a new empire grew up, in the very heart of the land, forming a counterpoise to the colossal power which had so long overshadowed it.[17]

Cortés now felt himself strong enough to put in execution the plans for recovering the capital, over which he had been brooding ever since the hour of his expulsion. He had greatly undervalued the resources of the Aztec monarchy. He was now aware, from bitter experience, that, to vanquish it, his own forces, and all he could hope to muster, would be incompetent, without a very extensive support from the Indians themselves. A large army would, moreover, require large supplies for its maintenance, and these could not be regularly obtained, during a protracted siege, without the friendly coöperation of the natives. On such support he might now safely calculate from Tlascala, and the other Indian territories, whose warriors were so eager to serve under his banners. His past acquaintance with them had instructed him in their national character and system of war; while the natives who had fought under his command, if they had caught little of the Spanish tactics, had learned to act in concert with the white men, and to obey him implicitly as their commander. This was a considerable improvement in such wild and disorderly levies, and greatly augmented the strength derived from numbers.

Experience showed, that, in a future conflict with the capital, it would not do to trust to the causeways, but that, to succeed, he must command the lake. He proposed, therefore, to build a number of vessels like those constructed under his orders in Montezuma's time, and afterwards destroyed by the inhabitants. For this he had still the services of the same experienced shipbuilder, Martin Lopez, who, as we have seen, had fortunately escaped the slaughter of the "Melancholy Night." Cortés now sent this man to Tlascala, with orders to build thirteen brigantines, which might be taken to pieces and carried on the shoulders of the Indians to be launched on the waters of Lake Tezcuco. The sails, rigging, and iron work, were to be brought from Vera Cruz, where they had been stored since their removal from the dismantled ships. It was a bold conception, that of constructing a fleet to be transported across forest and mountain before it was launched on its destined waters! But it suited the daring genius

[17] For the hostilities with the Indian tribes, noticed in the preceding pages, see, in addition to the Letter of Cortés, so often cited, Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 15,—Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 15, 16,—Ixtlilxochitl, Hist. Chich., MS., cap. 90,—Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 130, 132, 134,—Gomara, Crónica, cap. 114–117,—P. Martyr De Orbe Novo, dec. 5, cap. 6,—Camargo, Hist. de Tlascala, MS.

of Cortés, who, with the coöperation of his stanch Tlascalan confederates, did not doubt his ability to carry it into execution.

It was with no little regret, that the general learned at this time the death of his good friend Maxixca, the old lord of Tlascala, who had stood by him so steadily in the hour of adversity. He had fallen a victim to that terrible epidemic, the smallpox, which was now sweeping over the land like fire over the prairies, smiting down prince and peasant, and adding another to the long train of woes that followed the march of the white men. It was imported into the country, it is said, by a Negro slave, in the fleet of Narvaez.[18] It first broke out in Cempoalla. The poor natives, ignorant of the best mode of treating the loathsome disorder, sought relief in their usual practice of bathing in cold water, which greatly aggravated their trouble. From Cempoalla it spread rapidly over the neighboring country, and, penetrating through Tlascala, reached the Aztec capital, where Montezuma's successor, Cuitlahua, fell one of its first victims. Thence it swept down towards the borders of the Pacific, leaving its path strewn with the dead bodies of the natives, who, in the strong language of a contemporary, perished in heaps like cattle stricken with the murrain.[19] It does not seem to have been fatal to the Spaniards, many of whom, probably, had already had the disorder, and who were, at all events, acquainted with the proper method of treating it.

The death of Maxixca was deeply regretted by the troops, who lost in him a true and most efficient ally. With his last breath, he commended them to his son and successor, as the great beings whose coming into the country had been so long predicted by the oracles.[20] He expressed a desire to die in the profession of the Christian faith. Cortés no sooner learned his condition than he despatched father Olmedo to Tlascala. The friar found that Maxixca had already caused a crucifix to be placed before his sick couch, as the object of his adoration. After explaining, as intelligibly as he could, the truths of revelation, he baptized the

[18] "La primera fué de viruela y comenzó de esta manera. Siendo Capitan y Governador Hernando Cortés al tiempo que el Capitan Pánfilo de Narvaez desembarcó en esta tierra, en uno de sus navíos vino un negro herido de viruelas, la cual enfermedad nunca en esta tierra se habia visto, y esta sazon estaba esta nueva España en estremo muy llena de gente." Toribio, Hist. de los Indios, MS., Parte 1, cap. 1.

[19] "Morian como chinches á montones." (Ibid., ubi supra.) "Eran tantos los difuntos que morian de aquella enfermedad, que no habia quien los enterrase, por lo cual en México los echaban en las azequias, porque entónces habia muy grande copia de aguas y era muy grande hedor el que salia de los cuerpos muertos." Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva España, lib. 8, cap. 1.

[20] Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 136.

dying chieftain; and the Spaniards had the satisfaction to believe that the soul of their benefactor was exempted from the doom of eternal perdition, that hung over the unfortunate Indian who perished in his unbelief.[21]

Their late brilliant successes seem to have reconciled most of the disaffected soldiers to the prosecution of the war. There were still a few among them, the secretary Duero, Bermudez the treasurer, and others high in office, or wealthy hidalgos, who looked with disgust on another campaign, and now loudly reiterated their demand of a free passage to Cuba. To this Cortés, satisfied with the support on which he could safely count, made no further objection. Having once given his consent, he did all in his power to facilitate their departure, and provide for their comfort. He ordered the best ship at Vera Cruz to be placed at their disposal, to be well supplied with provisions and everything necessary for the voyage, and sent Alvarado to the coast to superintend the embarkation. He took the most courteous leave of them, with assurances of his own unalterable regard. But, as the event proved, those who could part from him at this crisis had little sympathy with his fortunes; and we find Duero not long afterwards in Spain, supporting the claims of Velasquez before the emperor, in opposition to those of his former friend and commander.

The loss of these few men was amply compensated by the arrival of others, whom fortune—to use no higher term—most unexpectedly threw in his way. The first of these came in a small vessel sent from Cuba by the governor, Velasquez, with stores for the colony at Vera Cruz. He was not aware of the late transactions in the country, and of the discomfiture of his officer. In the vessel came despatches, it is said, from Fonseca, bishop of Burgos, instructing Narvaez to send Cortés, if he had not already done so, for trial to Spain.[22] The alcalde of Vera Cruz, agreeably to the general's instructions, allowed the captain of the bark to land, who had no doubt that the country was in the hands of Narvaez. He was undeceived by being seized, together with his men, so soon as they had set foot on shore. The vessel was then secured; and the commander and his crew, finding out their error, were persuaded without much difficulty to join their countrymen in Tlascala.

A second vessel, sent soon after by Velasquez, shared the same fate, and those on board consented, also to take their chance in the expedition under Cortés.

[21] Ibid., ubi supra.—Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 19.—Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva España, MS., lib 12, cap. 39.

[22] Bernal Diaz, Ibid., cap. 131.

About the same time, Garay, the governor of Jamaica, fitted out three ships with an armed force to plant a colony on the Panuco, a river which pours into the Gulf a few degrees north of Villa Rica. Garay persisted in establishing this settlement, in contempt of the claims of Cortés, who had already entered into a friendly communication with the inhabitants of that region. But the crew experienced such a rough reception from the natives on landing, and lost so many men, that they were glad to take to their vessels again. One of these foundered in a storm. The others put into the port of Vera Cruz to restore the men, much weakened by hunger and disease. Here they were kindly received, their wants supplied, their wounds healed; when they were induced, by the liberal promises of Cortés, to abandon the disastrous service of their employer, and enlist under his own prosperous banner. The reinforcements obtained from these sources amounted to full a hundred and fifty men well provided with arms and ammunition, together with twenty horses. By this strange concurrence of circumstances, Cortés saw himself in possession of the supplies he most needed; that, too, from the hand of his enemies, whose costly preparations were thus turned to the benefit of the very man whom they were designed to ruin.

His good fortune did not stop here. A ship from the Canaries touched at Cuba, freighted with arms and military stores for the adventurers in the New World. Their commander heard there of the recent discoveries in Mexico, and, thinking it would afford a favorable market for him, directed his course to Vera Cruz. He was not mistaken. The alcalde, by the general's orders, purchased both ship and cargo; and the crews, catching the spirit of adventure, followed their countrymen into the interior. There seemed to be a magic in the name of Cortés, which drew all who came within hearing of it under his standard.[23]

Having now completed the arrangements for settling his new conquests, there seemed to be no further reason for postponing his departure to Tlascala. He was first solicited by the citizens of Tepeaca to leave a garrison with them, to protect them from the vengeance of the Aztecs. Cortés acceded to the request, and, considering the central position of the town favorable for maintaining his conquests, resolved to plant a colony there. For this object he selected sixty of his soldiers, most of whom were disabled by wounds or infirmity. He appointed the alcaldes,

[23] Ibid., cap. 131, 133, 136.—Herrera, Hist. General, ubi supra—Rel. Seg. de Cortès, ap. Lorenzana, pp. 154, 167.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 16.

regidores, and other functionaries of a civic magistracy. The place he called *Segura de la Frontera*, or Security of the Frontier.[24] It received valuable privileges as a city, a few years later, from the emperor Charles the Fifth;[25] and rose to some consideration in the age of the Conquest. But its consequence soon after declined. Even its Castilian name, with the same caprice which has decided the fate of more than one name in our own country, was gradually supplanted by its ancient one, and the little village of Tepeaca is all that now commemorates the once flourishing Indian capital, and the second Spanish colony in Mexico.

While at Segura, Cortés wrote that celebrated letter to the emperor,—the second in the series,—so often cited in the preceding pages. It takes up the narrative with the departure from Vera Cruz, and exhibits in a brief and comprehensive form the occurrences up to the time at which we are now arrived. In the concluding page, the general, after noticing the embarrassments under which he labors, says, in his usual manly spirit, that he holds danger and fatigue light in comparison with the attainment of his object; and that he is confident a short time will restore the Spaniards to their former position, and repair all their losses.[26]

He notices the resemblance of Mexico, and many of its features and productions, to the mother country, and requests that it may henceforth be called, "New Spain f the Ocean Sea."[27] He finally requests that a commission may be sent out, at once, to investigate his conduct, and to verify the accuracy of his statements.

This letter, which was printed at Seville the year after its reception, has been since reprinted, and translated, more than once.[28] It excited a great sensation at the court, and among

[24] Rel. Seg. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 156.

[25] Clavigero, Stor. del Messico, tom. 3, p. 153.

[26] "E creo, como ya á Vuestra Magestad he dicho, que en muy breve tomará al estado, en que antes yo la tenia, é se restaurarán las pérdidas pasadas." Rel. Seg., ap. Lorenzana, p. 167.

[27] "Me pareció, que el mas conveniente nombre para esta dicha Tierra, era llamarse *la Nueva España del Mar Océano:* y assi en nombre de Vuestra Magestad se le puso aqueste nombre; humildemente suplico á Vuestra Alteza lo tenga por bien, y mande, que se nombre assí." (Ibid., p. 167.) The name of "New Spain," without other addition, had been before given by Grijalva to Yucatad. Ante, Book 2, Chapter 1.

[28] It was dated, "De la Villa Segura de la Frontera de esta Nueva España, á treinta de Octubre de mil quinientos veinte años." But, in consequence of the loss of the ship intended to bear it, the letter was not sent till the spring of the following year: leaving the nation still in ignorance of the fate of the gallant adventurers in Mexico, and the magnitude of their discoveries.

the friends of science generally. The previous discoveries in the New World had disappointed the expectations which had been formed after the solution of the grand problem of its existence. They had brought to light only rude tribes, which, however gentle and inoffensive in their manners, were still in the primitive stages of barbarism. Here was an authentic account of a vast nation, potent and populous, exhibiting an elaborate social polity, well advanced in the arts of civilization, occupying a soil that teemed with mineral treasures and with a boundless variety of vegetable products, stores of wealth, both natural and artificial, that seemed, for the first time, to realize the golden dreams in which the great discoverer of the New World had so fondly, and in his own day so fallaciously, indulged. Well might the scholar of that age exult in the revelation of these wonders, which so many had long, but in vain, desired to see.[29]

With this letter went another to the emperor, signed, as it would seem, by nearly every officer and soldier in the camp. It expatiated on the obstacles thrown in the way of the expedition by Velasquez and Narvaez, and the great prejudice this had caused to the royal interests. It then set forth the services of Cortés, and besought the emperor to confirm him in his authority, and not to allow any interference with one who, from his personal character, his intimate knowledge of the land and its people, and the attachment of his soldiers, was the man best qualified in all the world to achieve the conquest of the country.[30]

It added not a little to the perplexities of Cortés, that he was still in entire ignorance of the light in which his conduct was regarded in Spain. He had not even heard whether his despatches sent the year preceding from Vera Cruz, had been received. Mexico was as far removed from all intercourse with the civilized world, as if it had been placed at the antipodes. Few vessels had entered, and none had been allowed to leave

[29] The state of feeling occasioned by these discoveries may be seen in the correspondence of Peter Martyr, then residing at the court of Castile. See, in particular, his epistle, dated March, 1521, to his noble pupil, the Marques de Mondejar, in which he dwells with unbounded satisfaction on all the rich stores of science which the expedition of Cortés had thrown open to the world. Opus Epistolarum, ep. 771.

[30] This memorial is in that part of my collection made by the former President of the Spanish Academy, Vargas Ponçe. It is signed by four hundred and forty-four names; and it is remarkable that this roll, which includes every other familiar name in the army, should not contain that of Bernal Diaz del Castillo. It can only be accounted for by his illness; as he tells us he was confined to his bed by a fever about this time. Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 134.

its ports. The governor of Cuba, an island distant but a few days' sail, was yet ignorant, as we have seen, of the fate of his armament. On the arrival of every new vessel or fleet on these shores, Cortés might well doubt whether it brought aid to his undertaking, or a royal commission to supersede him. His sanguine spirit relied on the former; though the latter was much the more probable, considering the intimacy of his enemy, the governor, with Bishop Fonseca, a man jealous of his authority, and one who, from his station at the head of the Indian department, held a predominant control over the affairs of the New World. It was the policy of Cortés, therefore, to lose no time; to push forward his preparations, lest another should be permitted to snatch the laurel now almost within his grasp. Could he but reduce the Aztec capital, he felt that he should be safe; and that, in whatever light his irregular proceedings might now be viewed, his services in that event would far more than counterbalance them in the eyes both of the Crown and of the country.

The general wrote, also, to the Royal Audience at St. Domingo, in order to interest them in his cause. He sent four vessels to the same island, to obtain a further supply of arms and ammunition; and, the better to stimulate the cupidity of adventurers, and allure them to the expedition, he added specimens of the beautiful fabrics of the country, and of its precious metals.[31] The funds for procuring these important supplies were, probably, derived from the plunder gathered in the late battles, and the gold which, as already remarked, had been saved from the general wreck by the Castilian convoy.

It was the middle of December, when Cortés, having completed all his arrangements, set out on his return to Tlascala, ten or twelve leagues distant. He marched in the van of the army, and took the way of Cholula. How different was his condition from that in which he had left the republican capital not five months before! His march was a triumphal procession, displaying the various banners and military ensigns taken from the enemy, long files of captives, and all the rich spoils of conquest gleaned from many a hard-fought field. As the army passed through the towns and villages, the inhabitants poured out to greet them, and, as they drew near to Tlascala, the whole

[31] Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 179.—Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 18.

Alonso de Avila went as the bearer of despatches to St. Domingo. Bernal Diaz, who is not averse, now and then, to a fling at his commander, says, that Cortés was willing to get rid of this gallant cavalier, because he was too independent and plain-spoken. Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 136.

population, men, women, and children, came forth celebrating their return with songs, dancing, and music. Arches decorated with flowers were thrown across the streets through which they passed, and a Tlascalan orator addressed the general, on his entrance into the city, in a lofty panegyric on his late achievements, proclaiming him the "avenger of the nation." Amidst this pomp and triumphal show, Cortés and his principal officers were seen clad in deep mourning in honor of their friend Maxixca. And this tribute of respect to their memory of their venerated ruler touched the Tlascalans more sensibly than all the proud display of military trophies.[32]

The general's first act was to confirm the son of his deceased friend in the succession, which had been contested by an illegitimate brother. The youth was but twelve years of age; and Cortés prevailed on him without difficulty to follow his father's example, and receive baptism. He afterwards knighted him with his own hand; the first instance, probably, of the order of chivalry being conferred on an American Indian.[33] The elder Xicotencatl was also persuaded to embrace Christianity; and the example of their rulers had its obvious effect in preparing the minds of the people for the reception of the truth. Cortés, whether from the suggestions of Olmedo, or from the engrossing nature of his own affairs, did not press the work of conversion further, at this time, but wisely left the good seed, already sown, to ripen in secret, till time should bring forth the harvest.

The Spanish commander, during his short stay in Tlascala, urged forward the preparations for the campaign. He endeavored to drill the Tlascalans, and to give them some idea of European discipline and tactics. He caused new arms to be made, and the old ones to be put in order. Powder was manufactured with the aid of sulphur obtained by some adventurous cavaliers from the smoking throat of Popocatepetl.[34] The construction of the brigantines went forward prosperously under the direction of Lopez, with the aid of the Tlascalans.[35] Timber

[32] Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 136.—Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 19.

[33] Ibid., ubi supra.

"Híçolo," says Herrera, "i armóle caballero, al vso de Castilla: i porque lo fuese de Jesu-Christo, le hiço bautiçar, i se llamó D. Lorenço Maxiscatzin."

[34] For an account of the manner in which this article was procured by Montaño and his doughty companions, see Ante, p. 49.

[35] "Ansí se hicié ron trece bergantines en el barrio de Atempa, junto á una hermita que se llama San Buenaventura, los quales hizo y otro Martin Lopez uno de los primeros conquistadores, y le ayudó Neguez Gomez." Hist. de Tlascala, MS.

was cut in the forests, and pitch, an article unknown to the Indians, was obtained from the pines on the neighboring Sierra de Malinche. The rigging and other appurtenances were transported by the Indian *tamanes* from Villa Rica; and by Christmas, the work was so far advanced, that it was no longer necessary for Cortés to delay the march to Mexico.

CHAPTER VII.

GUATEMOZIN, EMPEROR OF THE AZTECS.—PREPARATIONS FOR THE MARCH. — MILITARY CODE. — SPANIARDS CROSS THE SIERRA. — ENTER TEZCUCO. — PRINCE IXTLILXOCHITL.

1520.

WHILE the events related in the preceding Chapter were passing, an important change had taken place in the Aztec monarchy. Montezuma's brother and successor, Cuitlahua, had suddenly died of the small-pox, after a brief reign of four months,—brief, but glorious, for it had witnessed the overthrow of the Spaniards and their expulsion from Mexico.[1] On the death of their warlike chief, the electors were convened, as usual, to supply the vacant throne. It was an office of great responsibility in the dark hour of their fortunes. The *teoteuctli*, or high-priest, invoked the blessing of the supreme God on their deliberations. His prayer is still extant. It was the last one ever made on a similar occasion in Anahuac, and a few extracts from it may interest the reader, as a specimen of Aztec eloquence.

"O Lord! thou knowest that the days of our sovereign are at an end, for thou hast placed him beneath thy feet. He abides in the place of his retreat: he has trodden the path which we are all to tread; he has gone to the house whither

[1] Solís dismisses this prince with this remark, "that he reigned but a few days; long enough, however, for his indolence and apathy to efface the memory of his name among the people." (Conquista, lib. 4, cap. 16.) Whence the historiographer of the Indies borrowed the coloring for this portrait I cannot conjecture; certainly not from the ancient authorities, which uniformly delineate the character and conduct of the Aztec sovereign in the light represented in the text. Cortés, who ought to know, describes him "as held to be very wise and valiant." Rel. Seg., ap. Lorenzana, p. 166.—See also, Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva España, MS., lib. 12, cap. 29,—Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 19,—Ixtlilxochitl, Hist. Chich., MS., cap. 88,—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 16,—Gomara, Crónica, cap. 118.

we are all to follow,—the house of eternal darkness, where no light cometh. He is gathered to his rest, and no one henceforth shall disquiet him. . . . . All these were the princes, his predecessors, who sat on the imperial throne, directing the affairs of thy kingdom; for thou art the universal lord and emperor, by whose will and movement the whole world is directed; thou needest not the counsel of another. They laid down the intolerable burden of government, and left it to him, their successor. Yet he sojourned but a few days in his kingdom,—but a few days had we enjoyed his presence, when thou summonedst him away to follow those who had ruled over the land before him. And great cause has he for thankfulness, that thou hast relieved him from so grievous a load, and placed him in tranquillity and rest. . . . . Who now shall order matters for the good of the people and the realm? Who shall appoint the judges to administer justice to thy people? Who now shall bid the drum and the flute to sound, and gather together the veteran soldiers and the men mighty in battle? Our Lord and our Defence! wilt thou, in thy wisdom, elect one who shall be worthy to sit on the throne of thy kingdom; one who shall bear the grievous burden of government; who shall comfort and cherish thy poor people, even as the mother cherisheth her offspring? . . . . . O Lord most merciful! pour forth thy light and thy splendor over this thine empire! . . . . . Order it so that thou shalt be served in all, and through all."[2]

[2] The reader of Spanish will see, that, in the version in the text, I have condensed the original, which abounds in the tautology and repetitions characteristic of the compositions of a rude people.

"Señor nuestro! ya V. M. sabe como es muerto nuestro N.: ya lo habeis puesto debajo de vuestros pies: ya está en su recogimiento, y es ido por el camino que todos hemos de ir y á la casa donde hemos de morar, casa de perpetuas tinieblas, donde ni hay ventana, ni luz alguna: ya está en el reposo donde nadie le desasosegará. . . . . Todos estos señores y reys rigiéron, gobernáron, y gozáron del señorío y dignidad real, y del trono y sitial del imperio, los cuales ordenáron y concertáron las cosas de vuestro reino, que sois el universal señor y emperador, por cuyo albedrio y motivo se rige todo el universo, y que no teneis necesidad de consejo de ningun otro. Ya estos dichos dejáron la carga intolerable del gobierno que tragéron sobre sus hombros, y lo dejáron á su successor N., el cual por algunos pocos dias tuvo en pie su señorío y reino, y ahora ya se ha ido en pos de ellos al otro mundo, porque vos le mandásteis que fuese y le llamásteis, y por haberle descargado de tan gran carga, y quitado tan gran trabajo, y haberle puesto en paz y en reposo, está muy obligado á daros gracias. Algunos pocos dias le lográmos, y ahora para siempre se ausentó de nosotros para nunca mas volver al mundo. . . . . ¿Quien ordenará y dispondrá las cosas necesarias al bien del pueblo, señorío y reino? ¿Quien elegirá á los jueces particulares, que tengan carga de la gente baja por los barrios? ¿Quien mandará tocar el atambor y pífano para juntar gente para la guerra? ¿Y quien reunirá y acaudillará á los soldados viejos, y hombres diestros en la pelea? Señor

The choice fell on Quauhtemotzin, or Guatemozin, as euphoniously corrupted by the Spaniards.[3] He was nephew to the two last monarchs and married his cousin, the beautiful princess Tecuichpo, Montezuma's daughter. "He was not more than twenty-five years old, and elegant in his person for an Indian," says one who had seen him often; "valiant, and so terrible, that his followers trembled in his presence."[4] He did not shrink from the perilous post that was offered to him; and, as he saw the tempest gathering darkly around, he prepared to meet it like a man. Though young, he had ample experience in military matters, and had distinguished himself above all others in the bloody conflicts of the capital. He bore a sort of religious hatred to the Spaniards, like that which Hannibal is said to have sworn, and which he certainly cherished, against his Roman foes.

By means of his spies, Guatemozin made himself acquainted with the movements of the Spaniards, and their design to besiege the capital. He prepared for it by sending away the useless part of the population, while he called in his potent vassals from the neighborhood. He continued the plans of his predecessor for strengthening the defences of the city, reviewed his troops, and stimulated them by prizes to excel in their exercises. He made harangues to his soldiers to rouse them to a spirit of desperate resistance. He encouraged his vassals throughout the empire to attack the white men wherever they were to be met with, setting a price on their heads, as well as on the persons of all who should be brought alive to him in Mexico.[5] And it was no uncommon thing for the Spaniards to find hanging up in the temples of the conquered places the arms and ac-

nuestro y amparador nuestro! tenga por bien V. M. de elegir, y señalar alguna persona suficiente para que tenga vuestro trono, y lleve á cuestas la carga pesada del régimen de la república, regocige y regale á los populares, bien así como la madre regala á su hijo, poniéndole en su regazo. . . . . O señor nuestro humanísimo! dad lumbre y resplandor de vuestra mano á esto reino! . . . . . Hágase como V. M. fuere servido en todo, y por todo." Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva España, lib. 6, cap. 5.

[3] The Spaniards appear to have changed the *Qua*, beginning Aztec names, into *Gua*, in the same manner as, in the mother country, they changed the *Wad* at the beginning of Arabic names into *Guad*. (See Condé, El Nubiense, Descripcion de España, notas, passim). The Aztec *tzin* was added to the names of sovereigns and great lords, as a mark of reverence. Thus Cuitlahua was called Cuitlahuatzin. This termination, usually dropped by the Spaniards, has been retained from accident, or, perhaps, for the sake of euphony, in Guatemozin's name.

[4] "Mancebo de hasta veynte y cinco años, bien gentil hombre para ser Indio, y muy esforçado, y se hizo temer de tal manera, que todos los suyos temblauan dél; y estaua casado con vna hija de Monteçuma, bien hermosa muger para ser India." Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 130.

coutrements of their unfortunate countrymen who had been seized and sent to the capital for sacrifice.[5]—Such was the young monarch who was now called to the tottering throne of the Aztecs; worthy, by his bold and magnanimous nature, to sway the sceptre of his country, in the most flourishing period of her renown; and now, in her distress, devoting himself in the true spirit of a patriot prince to uphold her falling fortunes, or bravely perish with them.[7]

We must now return to the Spaniards in Tlascala, where we left them preparing to resume their march on Mexico. Their commander had the satisfaction to see his troops tolerably complete in their appointments; varying, indeed, according to the condition of the different reinforcements which had arrived from time to time; but, on the whole, superior to those of the army with which he had first invaded the country. His whole force fell little short of six hundred men; forty of whom were cavalry, together with eighty arquebusiers and crossbow-men. The rest were armed with sword and target, and with the copper-headed pike of Chinantla. He had nine cannon of a moderate calibre, and was indifferently supplied with powder.[8]

As his forces were drawn up in order of march, Cortés rode through the ranks, exhorting his soldiers, as usual with him on these occasions, to be true to themselves, and the enterprise in which they were embarked. He told them, they were to march against *rebels*, who had once acknowledged allegiance to the Spanish sovereign;[9] against barbarians, the enemies of their religion. They were to fight the battles of the Cross and of the crown; to fight their own battles, to wipe away the stain from their arms, to avenge their injuries, and the loss of the dear companions who had been butchered on the field or on the accursed altar of sacrifice. Never was there a war which

[5] Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 19.

[6] Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 134.

[7] One may call to mind the beautiful invocation which Racine has put into the mouth of Joad:

> "Venez, cher rejeton d'une vaillante race,
> Remplir vos défenseurs d'une nouvelle audace;
> Venez du diadême à leurs yeux vous couvrir,
> Et périssez du moins en roi, s'il faut périr."
>
> ATHALIE, acte 4, scène 5.

[8] Rel. Tercera de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 183.

Most, if not all, of the authorities,—a thing worthy of note,—concur in this estimate of the Spanish forces.

[9] "Y como sin causa ninguna todos los Naturales de Colúa, que son los de la gran Ciudad de Temixtitan, y los de todas las otras Provincias á ellas sujetas, no solamente se habian *rebelado* contra Vuestra Magestad." Ibid., ubi supra.

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offered higher incentives to the Christian cavalier; a war which opened to him riches and renown in this life, and an imperishable glory in that to come.[10]

Thus did the politic chief touch all the secret springs of devotion, honor, and ambition in the bosoms of his martial audience, waking the mettle of the most sluggish before leading him on the perilous emprise. They answered with acclamations, that they were ready to die in defence of the Faith; and would either conquer, or leave their bones with those of their countrymen in the waters of the Tezcuco.

The army of the allies next passed in review before the general. It is variously estimated by writers from a hundred and ten to a hundred and fifty thousand soldiers! The palpable exaggeration, no less than the discrepancy, shows that little reliance can be placed on any estimate. It is certain, however, that it was a multitudinous array, consisting not only of the flower of the Tlascalan warriors, but of those of Cholula, Tepeaca, and the neighboring territories, which had submitted to the Castilian crown.[11]

They were armed, after the Indian fashion, with bows and arrows, the glassy *maquahuitl*, and the long pike, which formidable weapon, Cortés, as we have seen, had introduced among his own troops. They were divided into battalions, each having its own banner, displaying the appropriate arms or emblem of its company. The four great chiefs of the nation marched in the van; three of them venerable for their years, and showing, in the insignia which decorated their persons, the evidence of many a glorious feat in arms. The panache of many-colored plumes floated from their casques, set in emeralds or other precious stones. Their *escaupil*, or stuffed doublet of cotton, was covered with the graceful surcoat of feather-work, and their feet were protected by sandals embossed with gold. Four young pages followed, bearing their weapons, and four others supported as many standards, on which were emblazoned the armorial bearings of the four great divisions of the republic.[12] The Tlascalans, though frugal in the extreme, and rude in their way of life, were as ambitious of display in their military attire as any of the races on the plateau. As they defiled before

[10] Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 184.

"Porque demans del premio, que les davia en el cielo, se les seguirian en esto mundo grandíssima honra, riquezas inestimables." Ixtlilxochitl, Hist. Chichimeca, MS., cap. 91.

[11] "Cosa muy de ver," says father Sahagun, without hazarding any precise number, "en la cantidad y en los aparejos que llevaban." Hist. de Nueva España, lib. 12, cap. 30, MS.

[12] Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 20.

Cortés, they saluted him by waving their banners and by a flourish of their wild music, which the general acknowledged by courteously raising his cap as they passed.[13] The Tlascalan warriors, and especially the younger Xicotencatl, their commander, affected to imitate their European masters, not merely in their tactics, but in minuter matters of military etiquette.

Cortés, with the aid of Marina, made a brief address to his Indian allies. He reminded them that he was going to fight their battles against their ancient enemies. He called on them to support him in a manner worthy of their renowned republic. To those who remained at home, he committed the charge of aiding in the completion of the brigantines, on which the success of the expedition so much depended; and he requested that none would follow his banner, who were not prepared to remain till the final reduction of the capital.[14] This address was answered by shouts, or rather yells, of defiance, showing the exultation felt by his Indian confederates at the prospect of at last avenging their manifold wrongs, and humbling their haughty enemy.

Before setting out on the expedition, Cortés published a code of ordinances, as he terms them, or regulations for the army, too remarkable to be passed over in silence. The preamble sets forth, that in all institutions, whether divine or human,—if the latter have any worth,—order is the great law. The ancient chronicles inform us, that the greatest captains in past times owed their successes quite as much to the wisdom of their ordinances, as to their own valor and virtue. The situation of the Spaniards eminently demanded such a code; a mere handful of men as they were, in the midst of countless enemies, most cunning in the management of their weapons and in the art of war. The instrument then reminds the army that the conversion of the heathen is the work most acceptable in the eye of the Almighty, and one that will be sure to receive his support. It calls on every soldier to regard this as the prime object of the expedition, *without which the war would be manifestly unjust, and every acquisition made by it, a robbery.*[15]

The general solemnly protests, that the principal motive, which operates in his own bosom, is the desire to wean the natives from their gloomy idolatry, and to impart to them the

[13] Ibid., ubi supra. [14] Ibid., loc. cit.

[15] "Que su principal motivo é intencion sea apartar y desarraigar de las dichas idolatrías á todos los naturales destas partes y reducillos ó á lo menos desear su salvacion y que sean reducidos al conocimiento de Dios y de su Santa Fe católica: porque si con otra intencion se hiciese la dicha guerra seria injusta y todo lo que en ella se oviesse Onoloxio é obligado á restitucion." Ordenanzas Militares, MS.

knowledge of a purer faith; and next, to recover for his master, the emperor, the dominions which of right belong to him.[16]

The ordinances then prohibit all blasphemy against God or the saints; a vice much more frequent among Catholic than Protestant nations, arising, perhaps, less from difference of religion, than of physical temperament,—for the warm sun of the South, under which Catholicism prevails, stimulates the sensibilities to the more violent expression of passion.[17]

Another law is directed against gaming, to which the Spaniards, in all ages, have been peculiarly addicted. Cortés, making allowance for the strong national propensity, authorizes it under certain limitations; but prohibits the use of dice altogether.[18] Then follow other laws against brawls and private combats, against personal taunts and the irritating sarcasms of rival companies; rules for the more perfect discipline of the troops, whether in camp or the field. Among others is one prohibiting any captain, under pain of death, from charging the enemy without orders; a practice, noticed as most pernicious and of too frequent occurrence,—showing the impetuous spirit and want of true military subordination in the bold cavaliers who followed the standard of Cortés.

The last ordinance prohibits any man, officer or private, from securing to his own use any of the booty taken from the enemy, whether it be gold, silver, precious stones, feather-work, stuffs,

[16] "E desde ahora protesto en nombre de S. M. que mi principal intencion é motivo es facer esta guerra é las otras que ficiese por traer y reducir á los dichos naturales al dicho conocimiento de nuestra Santa Fe é creencia; y despues por los sozjugare é supeditar debajo del yugo é dominio imperial é real de su Sacra Magestad, á quien juridicamente el Señorio de todas estas partes." Ordenanzas Militares, MS.

[17] "Ce n'est qu'en Espagne et en Italie," says the penetrating historian of the Italian Republics, "qu'on rencontre cette habitude vicieuse, absolument inconnue aux peuples protestans, et qu'il ne faut point confondre avec les grossiers juremens que le peuple en tout pays mêle à ses discours. Dans tous les accès de colère des peuples du Midi, ils s'attaquent aux objets de leur culte, ils les menacent, et ils accablent de paroles outrageantes la Divinité elle-même, le Rédempteur ou ses saints." Sismondi, Republiques Italiennes, cap. 126.

[18] Lucio Marineo, who witnessed all the dire effects of this national propensity at the Castilian court, where he was residing at this time, breaks out into the following animated apostrophe against it. "El jugador es el que dessea y procura la muerte de sus padres, el que jura falso por Dios y por la vida de su Rey y Señor, el que mata á su ánima, y la echa en el infierno; ¶y que no hará el jugador q no averguença de perder sus dineros, de perder el tiempo, perder el sueño, perder la fama, perder la honra, y perder finalmente la vida? Por lo cual como ya gran parte de los hombres siempre y donde quiera continuamente juegan, parésceme verdadera la opinion de acquellos que dizen *el infierno estar lleno de jugadores.*" Cosas Memorables de Espagña, (ed. Sevilla, 1539,) fol. 165.

slaves, or other commodity, however or wherever obtained, in the city or in the field; and requires him to bring it forthwith to the presence of the general, or the officer appointed to receive it. The violation of this law was punished with death and confiscation of property. So severe an edict may be thought to prove, that, however much the *Conquistador* may have been influenced by spiritual considerations, he was by no means insensible to those of a temporal character.[19]

These provisions were not suffered to remain a dead letter. The Spanish commander, soon after their proclamation, made an example of two of his own slaves, whom he hanged for plundering the natives. A similar sentence was passed on a soldier for the like offence, though he allowed him to be cut down before the sentence was entirely executed. Cortés knew well the character of his followers; rough and turbulent spirits, who required to be ruled with an iron hand. Yet he was not eager to assert his authority on light occasions. The intimacy into which they were thrown by their peculiar situation, perils, and sufferings, in which all equally shared, and a common interest in the adventure, induced a familiarity between men and officers, most unfavorable to military discipline. The general's own manners, frank and liberal, seemed to invite this freedom, which, on ordinary occasions, he made no attempt to repress; perhaps finding it too difficult, or at least impolitic, since it afforded a safety-valve for the spirits of a licentious soldiery, that, if violently coerced, might have burst forth into open mutiny. But the limits of his forbearance were clearly defined; and any attempt to overstep them, or to violate the established regulations of the camp, brought a sure and speedy punishment on the offender. By thus tempering severity with indulgence, masking an iron will under the open bearing of a soldier,—Cortés established a control over his band of bold and reckless adventurers, such as a pedantic martinet, scrupulous in enforcing the minutiæ of military etiquette, could never have obtained.

The ordinances, dated on the twenty-second of December, were proclaimed to the assembled army on the twenty-sixth. Two days afterwards, the troops were on their march, and Cortés, at the head of his battalions, with colors flying and music playing, issued forth from the gates of the republican capital, which had

[19] These regulations are reported with much uniformity by Herrera, Solís, Clavigero, and others, but with such palpable inaccuracy, that it is clear they never could have seen the original instrument. The copy in my possession was taken from the Muñoz collection. As the document, though curious and highly interesting, has never been published, I have given it entire in the *Appendix*, *Part* 2, *No.* 13.

so generously received him in his distress, and which now, for the second time, supplied him with the means for consummating his great enterprise. The population of the city, men, women, and children, hung on the rear of the army, taking a last leave of their countrymen, and imploring the gods to crown their arms with victory.

Notwithstanding the great force mustered by the Indian confederates, the Spanish general allowed but a small part of them now to attend him. He proposed to establish his headquarters at some place on the Tezcucan lake, whence he could annoy the Aztec capital, by reducing the surrounding country, cutting off the supplies, and thus placing the city in a state of blockade.[20]

The direct assault on Mexico itself he intended to postpone, until the arrival of the brigantines should enable him to make it with the greatest advantage. Meanwhile, he had no desire to encumber himself with a superfluous multitude, whom it would be difficult to feed; and he preferred to leave them at Tlascala, whence they might convey the vessels, when completed, to the camp, and aid him in his future operations.

Three routes presented themselves to Cortés, by which he might penetrate into the Valley. He chose the most difficult, traversing the bold sierra which divides the eastern plateau from the western, and so rough and precipitous, as to be scarcely practicable for the march of an army. He wisely judged, that he should be less likely to experience annoyance from the enemy in this direction, as they might naturally confide in the difficulties of the ground for their protection.

The first day, the troops advanced five or six leagues, Cortés riding in the van, at the head of his little body of cavalry. They halted at the village of Tetzmellocan, at the base of the mountain chain which traverses the country, touching, at its southern limit, the mighty Iztaccihuatl, or "White Woman,"—white with the snows of ages.[21] At this village they met with a friendly reception, and on the following morning began the ascent of the sierra.

[20] Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 10, cap. 20.—Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 127. The former historian states the number of Indian allies who followed Cortés, at eighty thousand; the latter at ten thousand! *¿Quien sabe?*

[21] This mountain, which, with its neighbor Popocatepetl, forms the great barrier—the *Herculis columnæ*—of the Mexican Valley, has been fancifully likened, from its long dorsal swell, to the back of a dromedary. (Tudor's Tour in North America, let. 22.) It rises far above the limits of perpetual snow in the tropics, and its huge crest and sides, enveloped in its silver drapery, form one of the most striking objects in the magnificent *coup d'œil* presented to the inhabitants of the capital.

The path was steep and exceedingly rough. Thick matted bushes covered its surface, and the winter torrents had broken it into deep stony channels, hardly practicable for the passage of artillery, while the straggling branches of the trees, flung horizontally across the road, made it equally difficult for cavalry. The cold, as they rose higher, became intense. It was keenly felt by the Spaniards, accustomed of late to a warm, or, at least, temperate climate; though the extreme toil, with which they forced their way upward, furnished the best means of resisting the weather. The only vegetation to be seen in these higher regions was the pine, dark forests of which clothed the sides of the mountains, till even these dwindled into a thin and stunted growth. It was night before the way-worn soldiers reached the bald crest of the sierra, where they lost no time in kindling their fires; and, huddling round their bivouacs, they warmed their frozen limbs, and prepared their evening repast.

With the earliest dawn, the troops were again in motion. Mass was said, and they began their descent, more difficult and painful than their ascent on the day preceding; for, in addition to the natural obstacles of the road, they found it strown with huge pieces of timber and trees, obviously felled for the purpose by the natives. Cortés ordered up a body of light troops to clear away the impediments, and the army again resumed its march, but with the apprehension that the enemy had prepared an ambuscade, to surprise them when they should be entangled in the pass. They moved cautiously forward, straining their vision to pierce the thick gloom of the forests, where the wily foe might be lurking. But they saw no living thing, except only the wild inhabitants of the woods, and flocks of the *zopilote*, the voracious vulture of the country, which, in anticipation of a bloody banquet, hung, like a troop of evil spirits, on the march of the army.

As they descended, the Spaniards felt a sensible and most welcome change in the temperature. The character of the vegetation changed with it, and the funereal pine, their only companion of late, gave way to the sturdy oak, to the sycamore, and, lower down, to the graceful pepper-tree mingling its red berry with the dark foliage of the forest; while, in still lower depths, the gaudy-colored creepers might be seen flinging their gay blossoms over the branches, and telling of a softer and more luxurious climate.

At length, the army emerged on an open level, where the eye, unobstructed by intervening wood or hill-top, could range, far and wide, over the Valley of Mexico. There it lay bathed in the golden sunshine, stretched out, as it were, in slumber, in the

arms of the giant hills, which clustered, like a phalanx of guardian genii, around it. The magnificent vision, new to many of the spectators, filled them with rapture. Even the veterans of Cortés could not withhold their admiration, though this was soon followed by a bitter feeling, as they recalled the sufferings which had befallen them within these beautiful, but treacherous, precincts. It made us feel, says the lion-hearted Conqueror, in his Letters, that "we had no choice but victory or death;—and, our minds once resolved, we moved forward with as light a step, as if we had been going on an errand of certain pleasure."[22]

As the Spaniards advanced, they beheld the neighboring hill-tops blazing with beacon fires, showing that the country was already alarmed and mustering to oppose them. The general called on his men to be mindful of their high reputation; to move in order, closing up their ranks, and to obey implicitly the commands of their officers.[23] At every turn among the hills, they expected to meet the forces of the enemy drawn up to dispute their passage. And, as they were allowed to pass the defiles unmolested, and drew near to the open plains, they were prepared to see them occupied by a formidable host, who would compel them to fight over again the battle of Otumba. But, although clouds of dusky warriors were seen, from time to time, hovering on the highlands, as if watching their progress, they experienced no interruption, till they reached a *barranca*, or deep ravine, through which flowed a little river, crossed by a bridge partly demolished. On the opposite side a considerable body of Indians was stationed, as if to dispute the passage; but, whether distrusting their own numbers, or intimidated by the steady advance of the Spaniards, they offered them no annoyance, and were quickly dispersed by a few resolute charges of cavalry. The army then proceeded, without molestation to a small town, called Coatepec, where they halted for the night. Before retiring to his own quarters, Cortés made the rounds of the camp with a few trusty followers, to see that all was safe.[24] He seemed to have an eye

[22] "Y prometímos todos de nunca de ella salir, sin Victoria, ó dejar allí as vidas. Y con esta determinacion ibamos todos tan alegres, como si fueramos á cosa de mucho placer." Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, p. 188.

[23] "Y yo torné á rogar, y encomendar mucho á los Españoles, que hiciessen, como siempre habian hecho, y como se esperaba de sus Personas; y que nadie no se desmandasse, y que fuessen con mucho concierto, y órden por su Camino." Ibid., ubi supra.

[24] "E como la Gente de pie venia algo cansada, y se hacia tarde, dormímos en una Poblacion, que se dice Coatepeque. . . . . E yo con diez de Caballo comenzé la Vela, y ronda de la prima, y hice, que toda la Gente estubiesse muy apercibida." Ibid., pp. 188, 189.

that never slumbered, and a frame incapable of fatigue. It was the indomitable spirit within, which sustained him.[25]

Yet he may well have been kept awake through the watches of the night, by anxiety and doubt. He was now but three leagues from Tezcuco, the far-famed capital of the Acolhuans. He proposed to establish his headquarters, if possible, at this place. Its numerous dwellings would afford ample accommodations for his army. An easy communication with Tlascala, by a different route from that which he had traversed, would furnish him with the means of readily obtaining supplies from that friendly country, and for the safe transportation of the brigantines, when finished, to be launched on the waters of the Tezcuco. But he had good reason to distrust the reception he should meet with in the capital; for an important revolution had taken place there, since the expulsion of the Spaniards from Mexico, of which it will be necessary to give some account.

The reader will remember that the cacique of that place, named Cacama, was deposed by Cortés, during his first residence in the Aztec metropolis, in consequence of a projected revolt against the Spaniards, and that the crown had been placed on the head of a younger brother, Cuicuitzca. The deposed prince was among the prisoners carried away by Cortés, and perished with the others, in the terrible passage of the causeway, on the *noche triste*. His brother, afraid, probably, after the flight of the Spaniards, of continuing with his own vassals, whose sympathies were altogether with the Aztecs, accompanied his friends in their retreat, and was so fortunate as to reach Tlascala in safety.

Meanwhile, a second son of Nezahualpilli, named Coanaco, claimed the crown, on his elder brother's death, as his own rightful inheritance. As he heartily joined his countrymen and the Aztecs in their detestation of the white men, his claims were sanctioned by the Mexican emperor. Soon after his accession, the new lord of Tezcuco had an opportunity of showing his loyalty to his imperial patron in an effectual manner.

A body of forty-five Spaniards, ignorant of the disasters in Mexico, were transporting thither a large quantity of gold, at the very time their countrymen were on the retreat to Tlascala. As they passed through the Tezcucan territory, they were attacked by Coanaco's orders, most of them massacred on the spot, and

[25] For the preceding pages, giving the account of the march, besides the Letter of Cortés, so often quoted, see Gomara, Crónica, cap. 121,—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 18,—Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 137,—Camargo, Hist. de Tlascala, MS.,—Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2. lib. 10, cap. 20,—Ixtlilxochitl, Relacion de la Venida de los Españoles y Principio de la Ley Evangélica, (México, 1829,) p. 9.

the rest sent for sacrifice to Mexico. The arms and accoutrements of these unfortunate men were hung up as trophies in the temples, and their skins, stripped from their dead bodies, were suspended over the bloody shrines, as the most acceptable offering to the offended deities.[26]

Some months after this event, the exiled prince, Cuicuitzca, wearied with his residence in Tlascala, and pining for his former royal state, made his way back secretly to Tezcuco, hoping, it would seem, to raise a party there in his favor. But, if such were his expectations, they were sadly disappointed; for no sooner had he set foot in the capital, than he was betrayed to his brother, who, by the advice of Guatemozin, put him to death, as a traitor to his country.[27]—Such was the posture of affairs in Tezcuco, when Cortés, for the second time, approached its gates; and well might he doubt, not merely the nature of his reception there, but whether he would be permitted to enter at all, without force of arms.

These apprehensions were dispelled the following morning, when, before the troops were well under arms, an embassy was announced from the lord of Tezcuco. It consisted of several nobles, some of whom were known to the companions of Cortés. They bore a golden flag in token of amity, and a present of no great value to Cortés. They brought also a message from the cacique, imploring the general to spare his territories, inviting him to take up his quarters in his capital, and promising on his arrival to become the vassal of the Spanish sovereign.

Cortés dissembled the satisfaction with which he listened to these overtures, and sternly demanded of the envoys an account of the Spaniards who had been massacred, insisting, at the same time, on the immediate restitution of the plunder. But the Indian nobles excused themselves, by throwing the whole blame upon the Aztec emperor, by whose orders the deed had been perpetrated, and who now had possession of the treasure. They urged Cortés not to enter the city that day, but to pass the night in the suburbs, that their master might have time to prepare suitable accommodations for him. The Spanish commander, however, gave no heed to this suggestion, but pushed forward his march, and at noon, on the thirty-first of December,

[26] See Ante, p. 410.

The skins of those immolated on the sacrificial stone were a common offering in the Indian temples, and the mad priests celebrated many of their festivals by publicly dancing with their own persons enveloped in these disgusting spoils of their victims. See Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva España, passim.

[27] Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 187.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 19.

1520, entered, at the head of his legions, the venerable walls of Tezcuco, "the place of rest," as not inaptly denominated.[28]

He was struck, as when he before visited this populous city, with the solitude and silence which reigned throughout its streets. He was conducted to the palace of Nezahualpilli, which was assigned as his quarters. It was an irregular pile of low buildings, covering a wide extent of ground, like the royal residence occupied by the troops in Mexico. It was spacious enough to furnish accommodations, not only for all the Spaniards, says Cortés, but for twice their number.[29] He gave orders, on his arrival, that all regard should be paid to the persons and property of the citizens; and forbade any Spaniard to leave his quarters under pain of death.

His commands were not effectual to suppress some excesses of his Indian allies, if the report of the Tezcucan chronicler be correct, who states that the Tlascalans burned down one of the royal palaces, soon after their arrival. It was the depository of the national archives; and the conflagration, however it may have occurred, may well be deplored by the antiquary, who might have found in its hieroglyphic records some clue to the migrations of the mysterious races which first settled on the highlands of Anahuac.[30]

Alarmed at the apparent desertion of the place, as well as by the fact that none of its principal inhabitants came to welcome him, Cortés ordered some soldiers to ascend the neighboring *teocalli* and survey the city. They soon returned with the report, that the inhabitants were leaving it in great numbers, with their families and effects, some in canoes upon the lake, others on foot towards the mountains. The general now comprehended the import of the cacique's suggestion, that the Spaniards should pass the night in the suburbs,—in order to secure time for evacuating the city. He feared that the chief himself might have fled. He lost no time in detaching troops to secure the principal avenues, where they were to turn back the fugitives, and arrest the cacique, if he were among the number. But it was

[28] Tezcuco, a Chichemec name, according to Ixtlilxochitl, signifying "place of detention or rest," because the various tribes from the North halted there on their entrance into Anahuac. Hist. Chich., MS., cap. 10.

[29] "La qual es tan grande, que aunque fueramos doblados los Españoles, nos pudieramos aposentar bien á placer en ella." Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, p. 191.

[30] "De tal manera que se quemáron todos los Archivos Reales de toda la Nueva España, que fué una de las mayores pérdidas que tuvo esta tierra, porque con esto toda la memoria de sus antiguayas y otras cosas que eran como Escrituras y recuerdos pereciéron desde este tiempo. La obra de las Casas era la mejor y la mas artificiosa que hubo en esta tierra." Ixtlilxochitl, Hist. Chich., MS., cap. 91.

too late. Coanaco was already far on his way across the lake to Mexico.

Cortés now determined to turn this event to his own account, by placing another ruler on the throne, who should be more subservient to his interests. He called a meeting of the few principal persons still remaining in the city, and, by their advice, and ostensible election, advanced a brother of the late sovereign to the dignity, which they declared vacant. This prince, who consented to be baptized, was a willing instrument in the hands of the Spaniards. He survived but a few months,[31] and was succeeded by another member of the royal house, named Ixtlilxochitl, who, indeed, as general of his armies, may be said to have held the reins of government in his hands during his brother's lifetime. As this person was intimately associated with the Spaniards in their subsequent operations, to the success of which he essentially contributed, it is proper to give some account of his earlier history, which, in truth, is as much enveloped in the marvellous, as that of any fabulous hero of antiquity.[32]

He was son, by a second queen, of the great Nezahualpilli. Some alarming prodigies at his birth, and the gloomy aspect of the planets, led the astrologers, who cast his horoscope, to advise the king, his father, to take away the infant's life, since, if he lived to grow up, he was destined to unite with the enemies of his country, and overturn its institutions and religion. But the old monarch replied, says the chronicler, that "the time had arrived when the sons of Quetzalcoatl were to come from the East to take possession of the land; and, if the Almighty had selected his child to coöperate with them in the work, His will be done."[33]

[31] The historian Ixtlilxochitl pays the following high tribute to the character of his royal kinsman, whose name was Tecocol. Strange that this name is not to be found—with the exception of Sahagun's work—in any contemporary record! "Fué el primero que lo fué en Tezcoco, con harta pena de los Españoles, porque fué nobilísimo y los quiso mucho. Fué D. Fernando Tecocoltzin muy gentil hombre, alto de cuerpo y muy blanco, tanto cuanto podia ser cualquier Español por muy blanco que fuese, y que mostraba su persona y término descender, y ser del linage que era. Supo la lengua Castellana, y así casi las mas noches despues de haber cenado, trataban él y Cortés de todo lo que se debia hacer acerca de las guerras." Ixtlilxochitl, Venida de los Esp., pp. 12, 13.

[32] The accession of Tecocol, as, indeed, his existence, passes unnoticed by some historians, and by others is mentioned in so equivocal a manner,—his Indian name being omitted,—that it is very doubtful if any other is intended than his younger brother Ixtlilxochitl. The Tezcucan chronicler, bearing this last melodious name, has alone given the particulars of his history. I have followed him, as, from his personal connections, having had access to the best sources of information; though, it must be confessed, he is far too ready to take things on trust, to be always the best authority.

[33] "El respondió, que era por demas a contra lo determinado por

As the boy advanced in years, he exhibited a marvellous precocity not merely of talent, but of mischievous activity, which afforded an alarming prognostic for the future. When about twelve years old, he formed a little corps of followers of about his own age, or somewhat older, with whom he practised the military exercises of his nation, conducting mimic fights and occasionally assaulting the peaceful burghers, and throwing the whole city as well as palaces into uproar and confusion. Some of his father's ancient counsellors, connecting this conduct with the predictions at his birth, saw in it such alarming symptoms, that they repeated the advice of the astrologers, to take away the prince's life, if the monarch would not see his kingdom one day given up to anarchy. This unpleasant advice was reported to the juvenile offender, who was so much exasperated by it, that he put himself at the head of a party of his young desperadoes, and, entering the houses of the offending counsellors, dragged them forth, and administered to them the *garrote*,—the mode in which capital punishment was inflicted in Tezcuco.

He was seized and brought before his father. When questioned as to his extraordinary conduct, he coolly replied, "that he had done no more than he had a right to do. The guilty ministers had deserved their fate, by endeavoring to alienate his father's affections from him, for no other reasons then his too great fondness for the profession of arms,—the most honorable profession in the state, and the one most worthy of a prince. If they had suffered death, it was no more than they had intended for him." The wise Nezahualpilli, says the chronicler, found much force in these reasons; and, as he saw nothing low and sordid in the action, but rather the ebullition of a daring spirit, which in after life might lead to great things, he contented himself with bestowing a grave admonition on the juvenile culprit.[34] Whether this admonition had any salutary effect on his subsequent demeanor, we are not informed. It is said, however, that, as he grew older, he took an active part in the wars of his

el Dios Criador de todas las cosas, pues no sin misterio y secreto juicio suyo le daba tal Hijo al tiempo y quando se acercaban las profecías de sus Antepasados, que havíase venir nuevas Gentes á poseer la Tierra, como eran los Hijos de Quetzalcoatl que aguardaban su venida de la parte oriental." Ixtlilxochitl, Hist. Chich., MS., cap. 69.

[34] "Con que el Rey no supo con que ocacion poderle castigar, porque lo parecieron sus razones tan vivas y fundadas que su parte no habia hecho cosa indebida ni vileza para poder ser castigado, mas tan solo una ferocidad de ánimo; pronóstico de lo mucho que habia de venir á saber por las Armas, y así el Rey dijo, que se fuese á la mano." Ixtlilxochitl, Hist. Chich., MS., cap. 69.

country, and, when no more than seventeen, had won for himself the insignia of a valiant and victorious captain.[35]

On his father's death, he disputed the succession with his elder brother, Cacama. The country was menaced with a civil war, when the affair was compromised by his brother's ceding to him that portion of his territories, which lay among the mountains. On the arrival of the Spaniards, the young chieftain—for he was scarcely twenty years of age—made, as we have seen, many friendly demonstrations towards them, induced, no doubt, by his hatred of Montezuma, who had supported the pretensions of Cacama. It was not, however, till his advancement to the lordship of Tezcuco, that he showed the full extent of his good-will. From that hour, he became the fast friend of the Christians, supporting them with his personal authority, and the whole strength of his military array and resources, which, although much shorn of their ancient splendor since the days of his father, were still considerable, and made him a most valuable ally. His important services have been gratefully commemorated by the Castilian historians; and history should certainly not defraud him of his just meed of glory,—the melancholy glory of having contributed more than any other chieftain of Anahuac to rivet the chains of the white man round the necks of his countrymen.

[35] Ibid., ubi supra.

Among other anecdotes recorded of the young prince's early developement is one of his having, when only three years old, pitched his nurse into a well, as she was drawing water, to punish her for certain improprieties of conduct of which he had been witness. But I spare the reader the recital of these astonishing proofs of precocity, as it is very probable, his appetite for the marvellous may not keep pace with that of the chronicler of Tezcuco.

[36] Ante, Vol. I. p. 311.

The two pillars, on which the story of the Conquest mainly rests, are the Chronicles of Gomara and of Bernal Diaz, two individuals having as little resemblance to each other as the courtly and cultivated churchman has to the unlettered soldier.

The first of these, Francisco, Lopez de Gomara, was a native of Seville. On the return of Cortés to Spain after the Conquest, Gomara became his chaplain; and on his patron's death continued in the service of his son, the second Marquess of the Valley. It was then that he wrote his Chronicle; and the circumstances under which it was produced might lead one to conjecture, that the narrative would not be conducted on the strict principles of historic impartiality. Nor would such a conjecture be without foundation. The history of the Conquest is necessarily that of the great man who achieved it. But Gomara has thrown his hero's character into so bold relief, that it has entirely overshadowed that of his brave companions in arms; and, while he has tenderly drawn the veil over the infirmities of his favorite, he is ever studious to display his exploits in the full blaze of panegyric. His situation may in some degree excuse his partiality. But it did not vindicate him in the eyes of the honest Las Casas, who seldom concludes a chapter of his own

narrative of the Conquest without administering a wholesome castigation to Gomara. He even goes so far as to tax the chaplain with "downright falsehood," assuring us "that he had neither eyes nor ears but for what his patron chose to dictate to him." That this was not literally true is evident from the fact that the narrative was not written till several years after the death of Cortés. Indeed, Gomara derived his information from the highest sources; not merely from his patron's family, but also from the most distinguished actors in the great drama, with whom his position in society placed him in intimate communication.

The materials thus obtained he arranged with a symmetry little understood by the chroniclers of the time. Instead of their rambling incoherencies, his style displays an elegant brevity; it is as clear as it is concise. If the facts are somewhat too thickly crowded on the reader, and occupy the mind too busily for reflection, they at least all tend to a determinate point and the story, instead of dragging its slow length along till our patience and interest are exhausted, steadily maintains its onward march. In short, the execution of the work is not only superior to that of most contemporary narratives, but, to a certain extent, may aspire to the rank of a classical composition.

Owing to these circumstances, Gomara's History soon obtained general circulation and celebrity; and, while many a letter of Cortés, and the more elaborate compositions of Oviedo and Las Casas, were suffered to slumber in manuscript, Gomara's writings were printed and reprinted in his own day, and translated into various languages of Europe. The first edition of the *Crónica de la Nueva España* appeared at Medina, in 1553; it was republished at Antwerp the following year. It has since been incorporated in Barcia's collection, and lastly, in 1826, made its appearance on this side of the water from the Mexican press. The circumstances attending this last edition are curious. The Mexican government appropriated a small sum to defray the expense of translating what was supposed to be an original chronicle of Chimalpain, an Indian writer who lived at the close of the sixteenth century. The care of the translation was committed to the laborious Bustamante. But this scholar had not proceeded far in his labor, when he ascertained that the supposed original was itself an Aztec translation of Gomara's Chronicle. He persevered, however, in his editorial labors, until he had given to the public an American edition of Gomara. It is a fact more remarkable, that the editor in his different compilations constantly refers to this same work as the Chronicle of Chimalpain.

The other authority to which I have adverted is Bernal Diaz del Castillo, a native of Medina del Campo in Old Castile. He was born of a poor and humble family, and in 1514 came over to seek his fortunes in the New World. He embarked as a common soldier under Cordova in the first expedition to Yucatan. He accompanied Grijalva in the following year to the same quarter; and finally enlisted under the banner of Cortés. He followed this victorious chief in his first march up the great plateau; descended with him to make the assault on Narvaez; shared the disasters of the *noche triste;* and was present at the siege and surrender of the capital. In short, there was scarcely an event or an action of importance in the whole war in which he did not bear a part. He was engaged in a hundred and nineteen different battles and recontres, in several of which he was wounded, and in more than one narrowly escaped falling into the enemy's hands. In all these Bernal Diaz displayed the old Castillian valor, and a loyalty which made him proof against the mutinous spirit that too often disturbed the harmony of the camp. On every occasion he was found true to his commander and to the cause in which he was embarked. And his fidelity is attested not only by his own report, but by the emphatic commendations of his general; who selected him on this account for offices of trust and responsibility, which furnished the

future chronicler with access to the best means of information in respect to the Conquest.

On the settlement of the country, Bernal Diaz received his share of the *repartimientos* of land and laborers. But the arrangement was not to his satisfaction; and he loudly murmurs at the selfishness of his commander, too much engrossed by the care for his own emoluments to think of his followers. The division of spoil is usually an unthankful office.—Diaz had been too long used to a life of adventure to be content with one of torpid security. He took part in several expeditions conducted by the captains of Cortés, and he accompanied that chief in his terrible passage through the forests of Honduras. At length, in 1568, we find the veteran established as regidor of the city of Guatemala, peacefully employed in recounting the valorous achievements of his youth. It was then nearly half a century after the Conquest. He had survived his general and nearly all his ancient companions in arms. Five only remained of that gallant band who had accompanied Cortés on his expedition from Cuba; and those five, to borrow the words of the old chronicler, were "poor, aged, and infirm, with children and grandchildren looking to them for support, but with scarcely the means of affording it,—ending their days, as they had begun them, in toil and trouble." Such was the fate of the Conquerors of golden Mexico.

The motives which induced Bernal Diaz to take up his pen, at so late a period of life, were to vindicate for himself and his comrades that share of renown in the conquest, which fairly belonged to them. Of this they had been deprived, as he conceived, by the exaggerated reputation of their general; owing, no doubt, in part, to the influence of Gomara's writings. It was not, however, till he had advanced beyond the threshold of his own work, that Diaz met with that of the chaplain. The contrast presented by his own homely diction to the clear and polished style of his predecessor filled him with so much disgust, that he threw down his pen in despair. But, when he had read further, and saw the gross inaccuracies and what he deemed disregard of truth in his rival, he resumed his labors, determined to exhibit to the world a narrative which should, at least, have the merit of fidelity. Such was the origin of the *Historia Verdadera de la Conquista de la Nueva España.*

The chronicler may be allowed to have succeeded in his object. In reading his pages, we feel, that, whatever are the errors into which he has fallen, from oblivion of ancient transactions, or from unconscious vanity,—of which he had full measure,—or from credulity, or any other cause, there is nowhere a willful perversion of truth. Had he attempted it, indeed, his very simplicity would have betrayed him. Even in relation to Cortés, while he endeavors to adjust the true balance between his pretentions and those of his followers, and while he freely exposes his cunning or cupidity, and sometimes his cruelty, he does ample justice to his great and heroic qualities. With all his defects, it is clear that he considers his own chief as superior to any other of ancient or modern times. In the heat of remonstrance, he is ever ready to testify his loyalty and personal attachment. When calumnies assail his commander, or he experiences unmerited slight or indignity, the loyal chronicler is prompt to step forward and shield him. In short, it is evident, that, however much he may at times censure Cortés, he will allow no one else to do it.

Bernal Diaz, the untutored child of nature, is a most true and literal copyist of nature. He transfers the scenes of real life by a sort of *daguerreotype* process, if I may so say, to his pages. He is among chroniclers what De Foe is among novelists. He introduces us into the heart of the camp, we huddle round the bivouac with the soldiers, loiter with them on their wearisome marches, listen to their stories, their murmurs of discontent, their plans of conquest, their hopes, their triumphs, their disappointments. All the picturesque scenes and romantic incidents of the campaign are reflected in his page as in a mirror. The lapse of fifty years has had no power over the spirit of the

veteran. The fire of youth glows in every line of his rude history; and, as he calls up the scenes of the past, the remembrance of the brave companions who are gone, gives, it may be, a warmer coloring to the picture, than if it had been made at an earlier period. Time, and reflection, and the apprehensions for the future, which might steal over the evening of life, have no power over the settled opinions of his earlier days. He has no misgivings as to the right of conquest, or as to the justice of the severities inflicted on the natives. He is still the soldier of the Cross; and those who fell by his side in the fight were martyrs for the faith. "Where are now my companions?" he asks; "they have fallen in battle or been devoured by the cannibal, or been thrown to fatten the wild beast in their cages! they whose remains should rather have been gathered under monuments emblazoned with their achievements, which deserve to be commemorated in letters of gold; for they died in the service of God and of his Majesty, and to give light to those who sat in darkness,—*and also to acquire that wealth which most men covet.*" The last motive—thus tardily and incidentally expressed—may be thought by some to furnish a better key than either of the preceding to the conduct of the Conquerors. It is, at all events, a specimen of that *naëveté* which gives an irresistible charm to the old chronicler; and which, in spite of himself, unlocks his bosom, as it were, and lays it open to the eye of the reader.

It may seem extraordinary, that, after so long an interval, the incidents of his campaigns should have been so freshly remembered. But we must consider that they were of the most strange and romantic character, well fitted to make an impression on a young and susceptible imagination. They had probably been rehearsed by the veteran again and again to his family and friends, until every passage of the war was as familiar to his mind as the "tale of Troy" to the Greek rhapsodist, or the interminable adventures of Sir Lancelot or Sir Gawain to the Norman minstrel. The throwing of his narrative into the form of chronicle was but repeating it once more.

The literary merits of the work are of a very humble order; as might be expected from the condition of the writer. He has not even the art to conceal his own vulgar vanity, which breaks out with a truly comic ostentation in every page of the narrative. And yet we should have charity for this, when we find that it is attended with no disposition to depreciate the merits of others, and that its display may be referred in part to the singular simplicity of the man. He honestly confesses his infirmity, though, indeed, to excuse it. "When my chronicle was finished," he says, "I submitted it to two licentiates, who were desirous of reading the story, and for whom I felt all the respect which an ignorant man naturally feels for a scholar. I besought them, at the same time, to make no change or correction in the manuscript, as all there was set down in good faith. When they had read the work, they much commended me for my wonderful memory. The language, they said, was good old Castilian, without any of the flourishes and finicalities so much affected by our fine writers. But they remarked, that it would have been as well, if I had not praised myself and my comrades so liberally, but had left that to others. To this I answered, that it was common for neighbors and kindred to speak kindly of one another; and, if we did not speak well of ourselves, who would? Who else witnessed our exploits and our battles,—unless, indeed, the clouds in the sky, and the birds that were flying over our heads?"

Notwithstanding the liberal encomiums passed by the licentiates on our author's style, it is of a very homely texture; abounding in colloquial barbarisms, and seasoned occasionally by the piquant sallies of the camp. It has the merit, however, of clearly conveying the writer's thoughts, and is well suited to their simple character. His narrative is put together with even less skill than is usual among his craft, and abounds in digressions and

repetitions, such as vulgar gossips are apt to use in telling their stories. But it is superfluous to criticise a work by the rules of art, which was written manifestly in total ignorance of these rules; and which, however we may criticise it, will be read and re-read by the scholar and the school-boy, while the compositions of more classic chroniclers sleep undisturbed on their shelves.

In what, then, lies the charm of the work? In that spirit of truth which pervades it; which shows us situations as they were, and sentiments as they really existed in the heart of the writer. It is this which imparts a living interest to his story; and which is more frequently found in the productions of the untutored penman solely intent upon facts, than in those of the ripe and fastidious scholar occupied with the mode of expressing them.

It was by a mere chance that this inimitable chronicle was rescued from the oblivion into which so many works of higher pretensions have fallen in the Peninsula. For more than sixty years after its composition, the manuscript lay concealed in the obscurity of a private library, when it was put into the hands of Father Alonso Remon, Chronicler General of the Order of Mercy. He had the sagacity to discover, under its rude exterior, its high value in illustrating the history of the Conquest. He obtained a license for the publication of the work, and under his auspices it appeared at Madrid in 1632 — the edition used in the preparation of these volumes.

BOOK SIXTH.

SIEGE AND SURRENDER OF MEXICO.

BOOK VI.

SIEGE AND SURRENDER OF MEXICO.

CHAPTER I.

ARRANGEMENTS AT TEZCUCO.—SACK OF IZTAPALAPAN.—ADVANTAGES OF THE SPANIARDS.—WISE POLICY OF CORTES.—TRANSPORTATION OF THE BRIGANTINES.

1521.

THE city of Tezcuco was the best position, probably, which Cortés could have chosen for the headquarters of the army. It supplied all the accommodations for lodging a numerous body of troops, and all the facilities for subsistence, incident to a large and populous town.[1] It furnished, moreover, a multitude of artisans and laborers for the uses of the army. Its territories, bordering on the Tlascalan, afforded a ready means of intercourse with the country of his allies, while its vicinity to Mexico enabled the general, without much difficulty, to ascertain the movements in that capital. Its central situation, in short, opened facilities for communication with all parts of the Valley, and made it an excellent *point d'appui* for his future operations.

The first care of Cortés was to strengthen himself in the palace assigned to him, and to place his quarters in a state of defence which might secure them against surprise, not only from the Mexicans, but from the Tezcucans themselves. Since the election of their new ruler, a large part of the population had returned to their homes, assured of protection in person and property. But the Spanish general, notwithstanding their show of submis-

[1] "Así mismo hizo juntar todos los bastimentos que fuéron necesarios para sustentar el Exército y Guarniciones de Gente que andaban en favor de Cortés y así hizo traer á la Ciudad de Tezcuco el Maiz que habia en las Troxes y Graneros de las Provincias sugetas al Reyno de Tezcuco." Ixtlilxochitl, Hist. Chich., MS., cap, 91.

sion, very much distrusted its sincerity; for he knew that many of them were united too intimately with the Aztecs, by marriage and other social relations, not to have their sympathies engaged in their behalf.[2] The young monarch, however, seemed wholly in his interests; and, to secure him more effectually, Cortés placed several Spaniards near his person, whose ostensible province it was to instruct him in their language and religion, but who were in reality to watch over his conduct and prevent his correspondence with those who might be unfriendly to the Spanish interests.[3]

Tezcuco stood about half a league from the lake. It would be necessary to open a communication with it, so that the brigantines, when put together in the capital, might be launched upon its waters. It was proposed, therefore, to dig a canal, reaching from the gardens of Nezahualcoyotl, as they were called, from the old monarch who planned them, to the edge of the basin. A little stream or rivulet, which flowed in that direction, was to be deepened sufficiently for the purpose; and eight thousand Indian laborers were forthwith employed on this great work, under the direction of the young Ixtlilxochitl.[4]

Meanwhile Cortés received messages from several places in the neighborhood, intimating their desire to become the vassals of his sovereign, and to be taken under his protection. The Spanish commander required, in return, that they should deliver up every Mexican who should set foot in their territories. Some noble Aztecs, who had been sent on a mission to these towns, were consequently delivered into his hands. He availed himself of it to employ them as bearers of a message to their master, the emperor. In it he deprecated the necessity of the present hostilities. Those who had most injured him, he said, were no longer among the living. He was willing to forget the past; and invited the Mexicans, by a timely submission, to save their capital from the horrors of a siege.[5] Cortés had no expectation of producing any immediate result by this appeal. But he thought it might lie in the minds of the Mexicans, and that, if there was a party among them disposed to treat with him, it

[2] "No era de espantar que tu viese este recelo, porque sus Enemigos, y los de esta Ciudad eran todos Deudos y Parientes mas cercanos, mas despues el tiempo lo desengañó y vido la gran lealtad de Ixtlilxochitl, y de todos." Ixtlilxochitl, Hist. Chich., MS., cap. 92.

[3] Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 137.

[4] Ibid., ubi supra.—Ixtlilxochitl, Hist. Chich., MS., cap. 91.

[5] "Los principales, que habian sido en hacerme la Guerra pasada, eran ya muertos; y que lo pasado fuesse pasado, y que no quisiessen dar causa á que destruyesse sus Tierras, y Ciudades, porque me pesaba mucho de ello." Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 193.

might afford them encouragement, as showing his own willingness to coöperate with their views. At this time, however, there was no division of opinion in the capital. The whole population seemed animated by a spirit of resistance, as one man.

In a former page I have mentioned that it was the plan of Cortés, on entering the Valley, to commence operations by reducing the subordinate cities before striking at the capital itself, which, like some goodly tree, whose roots had been severed one after another, would be thus left without support against the fury of the tempest. The first point of attack which he selected was the ancient city of Iztapalapan; a place containing fifty thousand inhabitants, according to his own account, and situated about six leagues distant, on the narrow tongue of land, which divides the waters of the great salt lake from those of the fresh. It was the private domain of the last sovereign of Mexico; where, as the reader may remember, he entertained the white men, the night before their entrance into the capital, and astonished them by the display of his princely gardens. To this monarch they owed no good-will, for he had conducted the operations on the *noche triste.* He was, indeed, no more; but the people of his city entered heartily into his hatred of the strangers, and were now the most loyal vassals of the Mexican crown.

In a week after his arrival at his new quarters, Cortés, leaving the command of the garrison to Sandoval, marched against this Indian city, at the head of two hundred Spanish foot, eighteen horse, and between three and four thousand Tlascalans. Their route lay along the eastern border of the lake, gemmed with many a bright town and hamlet, or, unlike its condition at the present day, darkened with overhanging groves of cypress and cedar, and occasionally opening a broad expanse to their view, with the Queen of the Valley rising gloriously from the waters, as if proudly conscious of her supremacy over the fair cities around her. Further on, the eye ranged along the dark line of causeway connecting Mexico with the mainland, and suggesting many a bitter recollection to the Spaniards.

They quickened their step, and had advanced within two leagues of their point of destination, when they were encountered by a strong Aztec force, drawn up to dispute their progress. Cortés instantly gave them battle. The barbarians showed their usual courage; but, after some hard fighting, were compelled to give way before the steady valor of the Spanish infantry, backed by the desperate fury of the Tlascalans, whom the sight of an Aztec seemed to inflame almost to madness. The enemy retreated in disorder, closely followed by the Spaniards. When

they had arrived within half a league of Iztapalapan, they observed a number of canoes filled with Indians, who appeared to be laboring on the mole which hemmed in the waters of the salt lake. Swept along in the tide of pursuit, they gave little heed to it, but, following up the chase, entered pell-mell with the fugitives into the city.

The houses stood some of them on dry ground, some on piles in the water. The former were deserted by the inhabitants, most of whom had escaped in canoes across the lake, leaving, in their haste, their effects behind them. The Tlascalans poured at once into the vacant dwellings and loaded themselves with booty; while the enemy, making the best of their way through this part of the town, sought shelter in the buildings erected over the water, or among the reeds which sprung from its shallow bottom. In the houses were many of the citizens also, who still lingered with their wives and children, unable to find the means of transporting themselves from the scene of danger.

Cortés, supported by his own men, and by such of the allies as could be brought to obey his orders, attacked the enemy in this last place of their retreat. Both parties fought up to their girdles in the water. A desperate struggle ensued; as the Aztec fought with the fury of a tiger driven to bay by the huntsmen. It was all in vain. The enemy was overpowered in every quarter. The citizen shared the fate of the soldier, and a pitiless massacre succeeded, without regard to sex or age. Cortés endeavored to stop it. But it would have been as easy to call away the starving wolf from the carcass he was devouring, as the Tlascalan who had once tasted the blood of an enemy. More than six thousand, including women and children, according to the Conqueror's own statement, perished in the conflict.[6]

Darkness meanwhile had set in; but it was dispelled in some measure by the light of the burning houses, which the troops had set on fire in different parts of the town. Their insulated position, it is true, prevented the flames from spreading from one building to another, but the solitary masses threw a strong and lurid glare over their own neighborhood, which gave additional horror to the scene. As resistance was now at an end, the soldiers abandoned themselves to pillage, and soon stripped the dwellings of every portable article of any value.

While engaged in this work of devastation, a murmuring sound was heard as of the hoarse rippling of waters, and a cry

[6] "Muriéron de ellos mas de seis mil ánimas, entre Hombres, y Mugere y Niños; porque los Indios nuestros Amigos, vista la Victoria, que Dios nos daba, no entendian en otra cosa, sino en matar á diestro y á siniestro." Ibid., p. 197.

soon arose among the Indians that the dikes were broken! Cortés now comprehended the business of the men whom he had seen in the canoes at work on the mole which fenced in the great basin of Lake Tezcuco.[7] It had been pierced by the desperate Indians, who thus laid the country under an inundation, by suffering the waters of the salt lake to spread themselves over the lower level, through the opening. Greatly alarmed, the general called his men together, and made all haste to evacuate the city. Had they remained three hours longer, he says, not a soul could have escaped.[8] They came staggering under the weight of booty, wading with difficulty through the water, which was fast gaining upon them. For some distance, their path was illumined by the glare of the burning buildings. But, as the light faded away in distance, they wandered with uncertain steps, sometimes up to their knees, at others up to their waists, in the water, through which they floundered on with the greatest difficulty. As they reached the opening in the dike, the stream became deeper, and flowed out with such a current that the men were unable to maintain their footing. The Spaniards, breasting the flood, forced their way through; but many of the Indians, unable to swim, were borne down by the waters. All the plunder was lost. The powder was spoiled; the arms and clothes of the soldiers were saturated with the brine, and the cold night wind, as it blew over them, benumbed their weary limbs till they could scarcely drag them along. At dawn they beheld the lake swarming with canoes full of Indians, who had anticipated their disaster, and who now saluted them with showers of stones, arrows, and other deadly missiles. Bodies of light troops hovering in the distance, disquieted the flanks of the army in like manner. The Spaniards had no desire to close with the enemy. They only wished to regain their comfortable quarters in Tezcuco, where they arrived on the same day, more disconsolate and fatigued than after many a long march and hard-fought battle.[9]

The close of the expedition, so different from its brilliant com-

[7] "Estándolas quemando, pareció que Nuestro Señor me inspiró, y trujo á la memoria la Calzada, ó Presa, que habia visto rota en el Camino, y representóseme el gran daño, que era." Ibid., loc. cit.

[8] "Y certifico á Vuestra Magestad, que si aquella noche no pasaramos el Agua, óaguardaramos tres horas mas, que ninguno de nosotros escapara, porque quedabamos cercados de Agua, sin tener paso por parte ninguna." Ibid., ubi supra.

[9] The general's own Letter to the Emperor is so full and precise, that it is the very best authority for this event. The story is told also by Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 138.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 18,—Ixtlilxochitl, Hist. Chich., MS., cap. 92,—Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 3, lib. 1, cap. 2, et auct. aliis.

mencement, greatly disappointed Cortés. His numerical loss had, indeed, not been great; but this affair convinced him how much he had to apprehend from the resolution of a people, who, with a spirit worthy of the ancient Hollanders, were prepared to bury their country under water, rather than to submit. Still the enemy had little cause for congratulation; since, independently of the number of slain, they had seen one of their most flourishing cities sacked, and in part, at least, laid in ruins,—one of those, too, which, in its public works, displayed the nearest approach to civilization. Such are the triumphs of war!

The expedition of Cortés, notwithstanding the disasters which checkered it, was favorable to the Spanish cause. The fate of Iztapalapan struck a terror throughout the Valley. The consequences were soon apparent in the deputations sent by the different places eager to offer their submission. Its influence was visible, indeed, beyond the mountains. Among others, the people of Otumba, the town near which the Spaniards had gained their famous victory, sent to tender their allegiance and to request the protection of the powerful strangers. They excused themselves, as usual, for the part they had taken in the late hostilities, by throwing the blame on the Aztecs.

But the place of most importance, which thus claimed their protection, was Chalco, situated on the eastern extremity of the lake of that name. It was an ancient city, peopled by a kindred tribe of the Aztecs, and once their formidable rival. The Mexican emperor, distrusting their loyalty, had placed a garrison within their walls to hold them in check. The rulers of the city now sent a message secretly to Cortés, proposing to put themselves under his protection, if he would enable them to expel the garrison.

The Spanish commander did not hesitate; but instantly detached a considerable force under Sandoval for this object. On the march, his rear-guard, composed of Tlascalans, was roughly handled by some light troops of the Mexicans. But he took his revenge in a pitched battle which took place with the main body of the enemy at no great distance from Chalco. They were drawn up on a level ground, covered with green crops of maize and maguey. The field is traversed by the road which at this day leads from the last mentioned city to Tezcuco.[10] Sandoval, charging the enemy at the head of his cavalry, threw them into disorder. But they quickly rallied, formed again, and renewed the battle with greater spirit than ever. In a second attempt he was more fortunate; and, breaking through their lines by a des-

[10] Lorenzana, p. 199, nota.

perate onset, the brave cavalier succeeded, after a warm, but ineffectual, struggle on their part, in completely routing and driving them from the field. The conquering army continued its march to Chalco, which the Mexican garrison had already evacuated, and was received in triumph by the assembled citizens, who seemed eager to testify their gratitude for their deliverance from the Aztec yoke. After taking such measures as he could for the permanent security of the place, Sandoval returned to Tezcuco, accompanied by the two young lords of the city, sons of the late cacique.

They were courteously received by Cortés; and they informed him that their father had died full of years, a short time before. With his last breath he had expressed his regret that he should not have lived to see Malinche. He believed that the white men were the beings predicted by the oracles, as one day to come from the East and take possession of the land;[11] and he enjoined it on his children, should the strangers return to the valley, to render them their homage and allegiance. The young caciques expressed their readiness to do so; but, as this must bring on them the vengeance of the Aztecs, they implored the general to furnish a sufficient force for their protection.[12]

Cortés received a similar application from various other towns, which were disposed, could they do so with safety, to throw off the Mexican yoke. But he was in no situation to comply with their request. He now felt, more sensibly than ever, the incompetency of his means to his undertaking. "I assure your Majesty," he writes in his letter to the Emperor, "the greatest uneasiness which I feel, after all my labors and fatigues, is from my inability to succor and support our Indian friends, your Majesty's loyal vassals."[13] Far from having a force competent to this, he had scarcely enough for his own protection. His vigilant enemy had an eye on all his movements, and, should he cripple his strength by sending away too many detachments or by employing them at too great a distance, would be prompt to take advantage of it. His only expeditions, hitherto, had been in the neighborhood, where the troops, after striking some sud-

[11] "Porque ciertamente sus antepassados les auian dicho, que auian de señorear aquellas tierras hombres que vernian con barbas de hazia donde sale el Sol, y que por las cosas que han visto, eramos nosotros." Bernal Diaz, Hist de la Conquista, cap. 139.

[12] Ibid., ubi supra.—Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 200—Gomara, Crónica, cap. 122.—Venida de los Esp., p. 15.

[13] "Y certifico á Vuestra Magestad, allende de nuestro trabajo y necesidad, la mayor fatiga, que tenia, era no poder ayudar, y socorrer á los Indios nuestros Amigos, que por ser Vasallos de Vuestra Magestad, eran molestados y trabajados de los de Culúa." Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, p. 204.

den and decisive blow, might speedily regain their quarters. The utmost watchfulness was maintained there, and the Spaniards lived in as constant preparation for an assault, as if their camp was pitched under the walls of Mexico.

On two occasions the general had sallied forth and engaged the enemy in the environs of Tezcuco. At one time a thousand canoes, filled with Aztecs, crossed the lake to gather in a large crop of Indian corn nearly ripe, on its borders. Cortés thought it important to secure this for himself. He accordingly marched out and gave battle to the enemy, drove them from the field, and swept away the rich harvest to the granaries of Tezcuco. Another time a strong body of Mexicans had established themselves in some neighboring towns friendly to their interests. Cortés, again sallying, dislodged them from their quarters, beat them in several skirmishes, and reduced the places to obedience. But these enterprises demanded all his resources, and left him nothing to spare for his allies. In this exigency, his fruitful genius suggested an expedient for supplying the deficiency of his means.

Some of the friendly cities without the Valley, observing the numerous beacon-fires on the mountains, inferred that the Mexicans were mustering in great strength, and that the Spaniards must be hard pressed in their new quarters. They sent messengers to Tezcuco expressing their apprehension, and offering reinforcements, which the general, when he set out on his march, had declined. He returned many thanks for the proffered aid; but, while he declined it for himself, as unnecessary, he indicated in what manner their services might be effectual for the defence of Chalco and the other places which had invoked his protection. But his Indian allies were in deadly feud with these places, whose inhabitants had too often fought under the Aztec banner not to have been engaged in repeated wars with the people beyond the mountains.

Cortés set himself earnestly to reconcile these differences. He told the hostile parties that they should be willing to forget their mutual wrongs, since they had entered into new relations. They were now vassals of the same sovereign, engaged in a common enterprise against the formidable foe who had so long trodden them in the dust. Singly they could do little, but united they might protect each other's weakness and hold their enemy at bay, till the Spaniards could come to their assistance. These arguments finally prevailed; and the politic general had the satisfaction to see the high-spirited and hostile tribes forego their long-cherished rivalry, and, resigning the pleasures of revenge, so dear to the barbarian, embrace one another as friends and

champions in a common cause. To this wise policy the Spanish commander owed quite as much of his subsequent successes, as to his arms.[14]

Thus the foundations of the Mexican empire were hourly loosening, as the great vassals, around the capital, on whom it most relied, fell off one after another from their allegiance. The Aztecs, properly so called, formed but a small part of the population of the Valley. This was principally composed of cognate tribes, members of the same great family of the Nahuatlacs, who had come upon the plateau at nearly the same time. They were mutual rivals and were reduced one after another by the more warlike Mexican, who held them in subjection, often by open force, always by fear. Fear was the great principle of cohesion which bound together the discordant members of the monarchy, and this was now fast dissolving before the influence of a power more mighty than that of the Aztec. This, it is true, was not the first time that the conquered races had attempted to recover their independence. But all such attempts had failed for want of concert. It was reserved for the commanding genius of Cortés to extinguish their old hereditary feuds, and, combining their scattered energies, to animate them with a common principle of action.[15]

Encouraged by this state of things, the Spanish general thought it a favorable moment to press his negotiations with the capital. He availed himself of the presence of some noble Mexicans, taken in the late action with Sandoval, to send another message to their master. It was in substance a repetition of

[14] Ibid., pp. 204, 205.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 19.

[15] Oviedo, in his admiration of his hero, breaks out into the following panegyric on his policy, prudence, and military science, which, as he truly predicts, must make his name immortal. It is a fair specimen of the manner of the sagacious old chronicler.

"Sin dubda alguna la habilidad y esfuerzo, é prudencia de Hernando Cortés mui dignas son que entre los cavalleros, é gente militar en nuestros tiempos se tengan en mucha estimacion, y en los venideros nunca se desacuerden. Por causa suya me acuerdo muchas veces de aquellas cosas que se escriven del capitan Viriato nuestro Español y Estremeño; y por Hernando Cortés me ocurren al sentido las muchas fatigas de aquel espejo de caballería Julio César dictador, como parece por sus comentarios, é por Suetonio é Plutarco é otros autores que en conformidad escriviéron los grandes hechos suyos. Pero los de Hernando Cortés en un Mundo nuevo, é tan apartadas provincias de Europa, é con tantos trabajos é necesidades é pocas fuerzas, é con gente tan innumerable, é tan bárbara é bellicosa, é apacentada en carne humana, é aun habida por excelente é sabroso manjar entre sus adversarios; é faltándole á él ó á sus mílites el pan é vino é los otros mantenimientos todos de España, y en tan diferenciadas régiones é aires é tan desviado é léjos de socorro é de su príncipe, cosas son de admiracion." Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 20.

the first, with a renewed assurance, that, if the city would return to its allegiance to the Spanish crown, the authority of Guatemozin should be confirmed, and the persons and property of his subjects be respected. To this communication no reply was made. The young Indian emperor had a spirit as dauntless as that of Cortés himself. On his head descended the full effects of that vicious system of government bequeathed to him by his ancestors. But, as he saw his empire crumbling beneath him, he sought to uphold it by his own energy and resources. He anticipated the defection of some vassals by establishing garrisons within their walls. Others he conciliated by exempting them from tributes or greatly lightening their burdens, or by advancing them to posts of honor and authority in the state. He showed, at the same time, his implacable animosity towards the Christians, by commanding that every one taken within his dominions should be straightway sent to the capital, where he was sacrificed, with all the barbarous ceremonies prescribed by the Aztec ritual.[16]

[16] Among other chiefs, to whom Guatemozin applied for assistance in the perilous state of his affairs, was Tangapan, lord of Michuacan, an independent and powerful state in the West which had never been subdued by the Mexican army. The accounts which the Aztec emperor gave him, through his ambassadors, of the white men, were so alarming, according to Ixtlilxochitl, who tells the story, that the king's sister voluntarily starved herself to death, from her apprehensions of the coming of the terrible strangers. Her body was deposited as usual, in the vaults reserved for the royal household, until preparations could be made for its being burnt. On the fourth day, the attendants, who had charge of it, were astounded by seeing the corpse exhibit signs of returning life. The restored princess, recovering her speech, requested her brother's presence. On his coming, she implored him not to think of hurting a hair of the heads of the mysterious visitors. She had been permitted, she said, to see the fate of the departed in the next world. The souls of all her ancestors she had beheld tossing about in unquenchable fire; while those who embraced the faith of the strangers were in glory. As a proof of the truth of her assertion, she added, that her brother would see, on a great festival, near at hand, a young warrior, armed with a torch brighter than the sun, in one hand, and a flaming sword, like that worn by the white men, in the other, passing from east to west over the city.

Whether the monarch waited for the vision, or ever beheld it, is not told us by the historian. But relying, perhaps, on the miracle of her resurrection, as quite a sufficient voucher, he disbanded a very powerful force, which he had assembled on the plains of Avalos, for the support of his brother of Mexico.

This narrative, with abundance of supernumerary incidents, not necessary to repeat, was commemorated in the Michuacan picture-records, and reported to the historian of Tezcuco himself, by the grandson of Tangapan. (See Ixtlilxochitl, Hist. Chich., MS., cap. 91.)—Whoever reported it to him, it is not difficult to trace the same pious fingers in it, which made so many wholesome legends for the good of the Church on the Old Continent, and which now found, in the credulity of the New, a rich harvest for the same godly work.

While these occurrences were passing, Cortés received the welcome intelligence, that the brigantines were completed and waiting to be transported to Tezcuco. He detached a body for the service, consisting of two hundred Spanish foot and fifteen horse, which he placed under the command of Sandoval. This cavalier had been rising daily in the estimation both of the general and of the army. Though one of the youngest officers in the service, he possessed a cool head and a ripe judgment, which fitted him for the most delicate and difficult undertakings. There were others, indeed, as Alvarado and Olid, for example, whose intrepidity made them equally competent to achieve a brilliant *coup-de-main*, But the courage of Alvarado was too often carried to temerity, or perverted by passion; while Olid, dark and doubtful in his character, was not entirely to be trusted. Sandoval was a native of Medellin, the birth-place of Cortés himself. He was warmly attached to his commander, and had on all occasions proved himself worthy of his confidence. He was a man of few words, showing his worth rather by what he did, than what he said. His honest, soldierlike deportment made him a favorite with the troops, and had its influence even on his enemies. He unfortunately died in the flower of his age. But he discovered talents and military skill, which, had he lived to later life, would undoubtedly have placed his name on the roll with those of the greatest captains of his nation.

Sandoval's route was to lead him by Zoltepec, a small city where the massacre of the forty-five Spaniards, already noticed, had been perpetrated. The cavalier received orders to find out the guilty parties, if possible, and to punish them for their share in the transaction.

When the Spaniards arrived at the spot, they found that the inhabitants, who had previous notice of their approach, had all fled. In the deserted temples they discovered abundant traces of the fate of their countrymen; for, besides their arms and clothing, and the hides of their horses, the heads of several soldiers, prepared in such a way that they could be well preserved, were found suspended as trophies of the victory. In a neighboring building, traced with charcoal on the walls, they found the following inscription in Castilian: "In this place the unfortunate Juan Juste, with many others of his company, was imprisoned," [17] This hidalgo was one of the followers of Narvaez, and had come with him into the country in quest of gold, but had found instead, an obscure and inglorious death. The eyes of the soldiers were suffused with tears, as they gazed on the

[17] "Aquí estuvo preso el sin ventura de Juã Iuste cõ otros muchos que traia en mi compañía." Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap 140.

gloomy record, and their bosoms swelled with indignation, as they thought of the horrible fate of the captives. Fortunately the inhabitants were not then before them. Some few, who subsequently fell into their hands, were branded as slaves. But the greater part of the population, who threw themselves, in the most abject manner, on the mercy of the Conquerors, imputing the blame of the affair to the Aztecs, the Spanish commander spared, from pity, or contempt.[18]

He now resumed his march on Tlascala; but scarcely had he crossed the borders of the republic, when he descried the flaunting banners of the convoy which transported the brigantines, as it was threading its way through the defiles of the mountains. Great was his satisfaction at the spectacle, for he had feared a detention of some days at Tlascala, before the preparations for the march could be completed.

There were thirteen vessels in all, of different sizes. They had been constructed under the direction of the experienced ship-builder, Martin Lopez, aided by three or four Spanish carpenters and the friendly natives, some of whom showed no mean degree of imitative skill. The brigantines, when completed, had been fairly tried on the waters of the Zahuapan. They were then taken to pieces, and, as Lopez was impatient of delay, the several parts, the timbers, anchors, iron-work, sails, and cordage were placed on the shoulders of the *tamanes*, and, under a numerous military escort, were thus far advanced on the way to Tezcuco.[19] Sandoval dismissed a part of the Indian convoy, as superfluous.

Twenty thousand warriors he retained, dividing them into two equal bodies for the protection of the *tamanes* in the centre.[20] His own little body of Spaniards he distributed in like manner. The Tlascalans in the van marched under the command of a chief who gloried in the name of Chichemecatl. For some reason Sandoval afterwards changed the order of march, and placed this division in the rear,—an arrangement which gave great umbrage to the doughty warrior that led it, who asserted his right

[18] Ibid., ubi supra.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 19.—Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 206.

[19] "Y despues de hechos por órden de Cortés, y probados en el rio que llaman de Tlaxcalla Zahuapan, que se atajó para probarlos los bergantines, y los tornáron á desbaratar por llevarlos á cuestas sobre hombros de los de Tlaxcalla á la ciudad de Tetzcuco, donde se echáron en la laguna, y se armáron de artillería y municion." Camargo, Hist. de Tlascala, MS.

[20] "Rel. Terc. De Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 207.

Bernal Diaz says sixteen thousand. (Ibid., ubi supra.) There is a wonderful agreement between the several Castilian writers as to the number of forces, the order of march, and the events that occurred on it.

to the front, the place which he and his ancestors had always occupied, as the post of danger. He was somewhat appeased by Sandoval's assurance that it was for that very reason he had been transferred to the rear, the quarter most likely to be assailed by the enemy. But even then he was greatly dissatisfied, on finding that the Spanish commander was to march by his side, grudging, it would seem, that any other should share the laurel with himself.

Slowly and painfully, encumbered with their heavy burden, the troops worked their way over the steep eminences and rough mountain-passes, presenting, one might suppose, in their long line of march, many a vulnerable point to an enemy. But although small parties of warriors were seen hovering, at times, on their flanks and rear, they kept at a respectful distance, not caring to encounter so formidable a foe. On the fourth day the warlike caravan arrived in safety before Tezcuco.

Their approach was beheld with joy by Cortés and the soldiers, who hailed it as the signal of a speedy termination of the war. The general, attended by his officers, all dressed in their richest attire, came out to welcome the convoy. It extended over a space of two leagues, and so slow was its progress that six hours elapsed before the closing files had entered the city.[21] The Tlascalan chiefs displayed all their wonted bravery of apparel, and the whole array composed of the flower of their warriors, made a brilliant appearance. They marched by the sound of atabal and cornet, and, as they traversed the streets of the capital amidst the acclamations of the soldiery, they made the city ring with the shouts of "Castile and Tlascala, long live our sovereign, the emperor!"[22]

"It was a marvellous thing," exclaims the Conqueror, in his Letters, "that few have seen, or even heard of,—this transportation of thirteen vessels of war on the shoulders of men, for nearly twenty leagues across the mountains!"[23] It was, indeed,

[21] "Estendíase tanto la Gente, que dende que los primeros comenzáron á entrar, hasta que los postreros hobiéron acabado, se pasáron mas de seis horas; sin quebrar el hilo de la Gente." Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 208.

[22] Dando vozes y silvos y diziendo: Viua, Viua el Emperador, nuestro Señor, y Castilla, Castilla, y Tlascala, Tlascala." (Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 140.) For the particulars of Sandoval's expedition, see, also, Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 19,—Gomara, Crónica, cap. 124,—Torquemada, Monarch, Ind., lib. 4, cap. 84,—Ixtlilxochitl, Hist. Chich., MS., cap. 92,—Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 3, lib. 1, cap. 2.

[23] "Que era cosa maravillosa de ver, y assí me parece que es de oir, llevar trece Fustas diez y ocho leguas por Tierra." (Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzano, p. 207.) "En rem Romano populo," exclaims Martyr, "quando illustrius res illorum vigebant, non facilem!" De Orbe Novo, dec. 5, cap. 8.

a stupendous achievement, and not easily matched in ancient or modern story; one which only a genius like that of Cortés could have devised, or a daring spirit like his have so successfully executed. Little did he foresee, when he ordered the destruction of the fleet which first brought him to the country, and with his usual forecast commanded the preservation of the iron-work and rigging,—little did he foresee the important uses for which they were to be reserved. So important, that on their preservation may be said to have depended the successful issue of his great enterprise.[24]

He greeted his Indian allies with the greatest cordiality, testifying his sense of their services by those honors and attentions which he knew would be most grateful to their ambitious spirits. "We come," exclaimed the hardy warriors, "to fight under your banner; to avenge our common quarrel, or to fall by your side"; and, with their usual impatience, they urged him to lead them at once against the enemy. "Wait," replied the general, bluntly, "till you are rested, and you shall have your hands full.[25]

[24] Two memorable examples of a similar transportation of vessels across the land are recorded, the one in ancient, the other in modern history; and both, singularly enough, at the same place, Tarentum, in Italy. The first occurred at the siege of that city by Hannibal; (see Polybius, lib. 8;) the latter some seventeen centuries later, by the Great Captain, Gonsalvo de Cordova. But the distance they were transported was inconsiderable. A more analogous example is that of Balboa, the bold discoverer of the Pacific. He made arrangements to have four brigantines transported a distance of twenty-two leagues across the Isthmus of Darien, a stupendous labor, and not entirely successful, as only two reached their point of destination. (See Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 2, cap. 11.) This took place in 1516, in the neighborhood, as it were, of Cortés, and may have suggested to his enterprising spirit the first idea of his own more successful, as well as more extensive, undertaking.

[25] "Y ellos me dijéron, que trahian deseo de se ver con los de Culúa, y que viesse lo que mandaba, que ellos, y aquella Gente venian con deseos, y voluntad de se vengar ó morir con nosotros; y yo les dí las gracias, y les dije, que reposassen, y que presto les daria las manos llenas." Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, p. 208.

CHAPTER II.

CORTES RECONNOITRES THE CAPITAL.—OCCUPIES TACUBA.—SKIRMISHES WITH THE ENEMY.—EXPEDITION OF SANDOVAL.—ARRIVAL OF REINFORCEMENTS.

1521.

IN the course of three or four days, the Spanish general furnished the Tlascalans with the opportunity so much coveted, and allowed their boiling spirits to effervesce in active operations. He had, for some time, meditated an expedition to reconnoitre the capital and its environs, and to chastise, on the way, certain places, which had sent him insulting messages of defiance, and which were particularly active in their hostilities. He disclosed his design to a few only of his principal officers, from his distrust of the Tezcucans, whom he suspected to be in correspondence with the enemy.

Early in the spring, he left Tezcuco, at the head of three hundred and fifty Spaniards and the whole strength of his allies. He took with him Alvarado and Olid, and entrusted the charge of the garrison to Sandoval. Cortés had had practical acquaintance with the incompetence of the first of these cavaliers for so delicate a post, during his short, but disastrous, rule in Mexico.

But all his precautions had not availed to shroud his designs from the vigilant foe, whose eye was on all his movements, who seemed even to divine his thoughts, and to be prepared to thwart their execution. He had advanced but a few leagues, when he was met by a considerable body of Mexicans, drawn up to dispute his progress. A sharp skirmish took place, in which the enemy were driven from the ground, and the way was left open to the Christians. They held a circuitous route to the north, and their first point of attack was the insular town of Xaltocan, situated on the northern extremity of the lake of that name, now called San Christóbal. The town was entirely surrounded by water, and communicated with the main land by means of causeways, in the same manner as the Mexican capital. Cortés, riding at the head of his cavalry, advanced along the dike, till he was brought to a stand by finding a wide open-

ing in it, through which the waters poured so as to be altogether impracticable, not only for horse, but for infantry. The lake was covered with canoes, filled with Aztec warriors, who, anticipating the movement of the Spaniards, had come to the aid of the city. They now began a furious discharge of stones and arrows on the assailants, while they were themselves tolerably well protected from the musketry of their enemy by the light bulwarks, with which, for that purpose, they had fortified their canoes.

The severe volleys of the Mexicans did some injury to the Spaniards and their allies, and began to throw them into disorder, crowded as they were on the narrow causeway, without the means of advancing, when Cortés ordered a retreat. This was followed by renewed tempests of missiles, accompanied by taunts and fierce yells of defiance. The battle-cry of the Aztec, like the war-whoop of the North American Indian, was an appalling note, according to the Conqueror's own acknowledgment, in the ears of the Spaniards.[1] At this juncture, the general fortunately obtained information from a deserter, one of the Mexican allies, of a ford, by which the army might traverse the shallow lake, and penetrate into the place. He instantly detached the greater part of the infantry on the service, posting himself with the remainder and with the horse at the entrance of the passage, to cover the attack and prevent any interruption in the rear.

The soldiers, under the direction of the Indian guide, forded the lake without much difficulty, though in some places the water came above their girdles. During the passage, they were annoyed by the enemy's missiles; but, when they had gained the dry level, they took ample revenge, and speedily put all who resisted to the sword. The greater part, together with the townsmen, made their escape in the boats. The place was now abandoned to pillage. The troops found in it many women, who had been left to their fate; and these, together with a considerable quantity of cotton stuffs, gold, and articles of food, fell into the hands of the victors, who, setting fire to the deserted city, returned in triumph to their comrades.[2]

Continuing his circuitous route, Cortés presented himself successively before three other places, each of which had been deserted by the inhabitants in anticipation of his arrival.[3] The

[1] "De lejos comenzáron á gritar, como lo suelen hazer en la Guerra, que cierto es cosa espantosa oillos." Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, p. 209.

[2] Ibid., loc. cit.—Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 141.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 20.—Ixtlilxochitl, Venida de los Esp., pp. 13, 14.—Idem, Hist. Chich., MS., cap. 92.— Gomara, Crónica, cap. 125.

[3] These towns rejoiced in the melodious names of Tenajoccan, Quauhtitlan and Azcapozalco. I have constantly endeavored to spare the reader, in the

principal of these, Azcapozalco, had once been the capital of an independent state. It was now the great slave-market of the Aztecs, where their unfortunate captives were brought, and disposed of at public sale. It was also the quarter occupied by the jewellers ; and the place whence the Spaniards obtained the goldsmiths who melted down the rich treasures received from Montezuma. But they found there only a small supply of the precious metals, or, indeed, of any thing else of value, as the people had been careful to remove their effects. They spared the buildings, however, in consideration of their having met with no resistance.

During the nights, the troops bivouacked in the open fields maintaining the strictest watch, for the country was all in arms and beacons were flaming on every hill-top, while dark masses of the enemy were occasionally descried in the distance. The Spaniards were now traversing the most opulent region of Anahuac. Cities and villages were scattered over hill and valley, with cultivated environs blooming around them, all giving token of a dense and industrious population. In the centre of this brilliant circumference stood the Indian metropolis, with its gorgeous tiara of pyramids and temples, attracting the eye of the soldier from every other object, as he wound round the borders of the lake. Every inch of ground, which the army trod, was familiar to them,—familiar as the scenes of childhood, though with very different associations, for it had been written on their memories in characters of blood. On the right rose the Hill of Montezuma, crowned by the *teocalli*, under the roof of which the shattered relics of the army had been gathered, on the day following the flight from the capital. In front lay the city of Tacuba, through whose inhospitable streets they had hurried in fear and consternation ; and away to the east of it, stretched the melancholy causeway.

It was the general's purpose to march at once on Tacuba, and establish his quarters in that ancient capital for the present. He found a strong force encamped under its walls, prepared to dispute his entrance. Without waiting for their advance, he rode at full gallop against them with his little body of horse. The arequebuses and crossbows opened a lively volley on their extended wings, and the infantry, armed with their swords and copper-headed lances, and supported by the Indian battalions, followed up the attack of the horse with an alacrity which soon put the enemy to flight. The Spaniards usually opened the combat with a charge of cavalry. But, had the science of the Aztecs been equal to their courage, they might with their long spears

text, any unnecessary accumulation of Mexican names, which, as he is aware by this time, have not even brevity to recommend them.

have turned the scale of battle, sometimes at least, in their own favor; for it was with the same formidable weapon, that the Swiss mountaineers, but a few years before this period of our history, broke and completely foiled the famous *ordonnance* of Charles the Bold, the best appointed cavalry of their day. But the barbarians were ignorant of the value of this weapon when opposed to cavalry. And, indeed, the appalling apparition of the war-horse and his rider still held a mysterious power over their imaginations, which contributed, perhaps, quite as much as the effective force of the cavalry itself, to their discomfiture.—Cortés led his troops without further opposition into the suburbs of Tacuba, the ancient Tlacopan, where he established himself for the night.

On the following morning, he found the indefatigable Aztecs again under arms, and, on the open ground before the city, prepared to give him battle. He marched out against them, and, after an action, hotly contested, though of no long duration, again routed them. They fled towards the town, but were driven through the streets at the point of the lance, and were compelled, together with the inhabitants, to evacuate the place. The city was then delivered over to pillage; and the Indian allies, not content with plundering the houses of every thing portable within them, set them on fire, and in a short time a quarter of the town —the poorer dwellings, probably, built of light, combustible materials—was in flames. Cortés and his troops did all in their power to stop the conflagration, but the Tlascalans were a fierce race, not easily guided at any time, and, when their passions were once kindled, it was impossible, even for the general himself, to control them. They were a terrible auxiliary, and, from their insubordination, as terrible sometimes to friend as to foe.[4]

Cortés proposed to remain in his present quarters for some days, during which time he established his own residence in the ancient palace of the lords of Tlacopan. It was a long range of low buildings, like most of the royal residences in the country, and offered good accommodations for the Spanish forces. During his halt here, there was not a day on which the army was not engaged in one or more rencontres with the enemy. They terminated almost uniformly in favor of the Spaniards, though

[4] They burned this place, according to Cortés, in retaliation of the injuries inflicted by the inhabitants on their countrymen in the retreat. "Y en amaneciendo los Indios nuestros Amigos comenzáron á saquear, y quemar toda la Ciudad, salvo el Aposento donde estabamos, y pusiéron tanta diligencia, que aun de él se quemó un Quarto; y esto se hizo, porque quando salimos la otra vez desbaratados de Temixtitan, pasando por esta Ciudad, los Naturales de ella juntamente con los de Temixtitan nos hiciéron muy cruel Guerra, y nos matáron muchos Españoles." Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, p. 210.

with more or less injury to them and to their allies. One encounter, indeed, had nearly been attended with more fatal consequences.

The Spanish general, in the heat of pursuit, had allowed himself to be decoyed upon the great causeway,—the same which had once been so fatal to his army. He followed the flying foe, until he had gained the further side of the nearest bridge, which had been repaired since the disastrous action of the *noche triste*. When thus far advanced, the Aztecs, with the rapidity of lightning, turned on him, and he beheld a large reinforcement in their rear, all fresh on the field, prepared to support their countrymen. At the same time, swarms of boats, unobserved in the eagerness of the chase, seemed to start up as if by magic, covering the waters around. The Spaniards were now exposed to a perfect hail-storm of missiles, both from the causeway and the lake ; but they stood unmoved amidst the tempest, when Cortés, too late perceiving his error, gave orders for the retreat. Slowly and with admirable coolness, his men receded, step by step, offering a resolute front to the enemy.[5] The Mexicans came on with their usual vociferation, making the shores echo to their war-cries, and striking at the Spaniards with their long pikes, and with poles, to which the swords taken from the Christians had been fastened. A cavalier, named Volante, bearing the standard of Cortés, was felled by one of their weapons, and, tumbling into the lake, was picked up by the Mexican boats. He was a man of a muscular frame, and, as the enemy were dragging him off, he succeeded in extricating himself from their grasp, and, clenching his colors in his hand, with a desperate effort sprang back upon the causeway. At length, after some hard fighting, in which many of the Spaniards were wounded, and many of their allies slain, the troops regained the land, where Cortés, with a full heart, returned thanks to Heaven for what he might well regard as a providential deliverance.[6] It was a salutary lesson ; though he should scarcely have needed one, so soon after the affair of Iztapalapan, to warn him of the wily tactics of his enemy.

It had been one of Cortés' principal objects in this expedition to obtain an interview, if possible, with the Aztec emperor, or with some of the great lords at his court, and to try if some

[5] "Luego mandó, que todos se retraxessen; y con el mejor concierto que pudo, y no bueltas las espaldas, sino los rostros á los contrarios, pie contra pie, como quien haze represas." Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 141.

[6] "Desta manera se escapó Cortés aquella vez del poder de México, y quando se vió en tierra firme, dió muchas gracias á Dios." Ibid., ubi supra.

means for an accommodation could not be found by which he might avoid the appeal to arms. An occasion for such a parley presented itself, when his forces were one day confronted with those of the enemy, with a broken bridge interposed between them. Cortés, riding in advance of his people, intimated by signs his peaceful intent, and that he wished to confer with the Aztecs. They respected the signal, and, with the aid of his interpreter, he requested, that, if there were any great chief among them, he would come forward and hold a parley with him. The Mexicans replied, in derision, they were all chiefs, and bade him speak openly what ever he had to tell them. As the general returned no answer, they asked, why he did not make another visit to the capital, and, tauntingly, added, "Perhaps Malinche does not expect to find there another Montezuma, as obedient to his commands as the former."[7] Some of them complimented the Tlascalans with the epithet of *women*, who, they said, would never have ventured so near the capital, but for the protection of the white men.

The animosity of the two nations was not confined to these harmless, though bitter, jests, but showed itself in regular cartels of defiance, which daily passed between the principal chieftains. These were followed by combats, in which one or more champions fought on a side, to vindicate the honor of their respective countries. A fair field of fight was given to the warriors, who conducted those combats, *à l'outrance* with the punctilio of a European tourney; displaying a valor worthy of the two boldest of the races of Anahuac, and a skill in the management of their weapons, which drew forth the admiration of the Spaniards.[8]

Cortés had now been six days in Tacuba. There was nothing further to detain him, as he had accomplished the chief objects of his expedition. He had humbled several of the places which had been most active in their hostility; and he had revived the credit of the Castilian arms, which had been much tarnished by their former reverses in this quarter of the Valley. He had also made himself acquainted with the condition of the capital, which he found in a better posture of defence then he had imagined. All the ravages of the preceding year seemed to be repaired, and there was no evidence, even to his experienced eye, that the wasting hand of war had so lately swept over the land. The Aztec troops, which swarmed through the Valley, seemed to be well appointed, and showed an invincible spirit, as if pre-

[7] "Pensais, que hay agora otro Muteczuma, para que haga todo, lo que quisieredes?" Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 211.

[8] "Y peleaban los unos con los otros muy hermosamente." Ibid. ubi supra.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 20.

pared to resist to the last. It is true, they had been beaten in every encounter. In the open field they were no match for the Spaniards, whose cavalry they could never comprehend, and whose firearms easily penetrated the cotton mail, which formed the stoutest defence of the Indian warrior. But, entangled in the long streets and narrow lanes of the metropolis, where every house was a citadel, the Spaniards, as experience had shown, would lose much of their superiority. With the Mexican emperor, confident in the strength of his preparations, the general saw there was no probability of effecting an accommodation. He saw, too, the necessity of the most careful preparations on his own part, indeed, that he must strain his resources to the utmost, before he could safely venture to rouse the lion in his lair.

The Spaniards returned by the same route by which they had come. Their retreat was interpreted into a flight by the natives, who hung on the rear of the army uttering vainglorious vaunts, and saluting the troops with showers of arrows, which did some mischief. Cortés resorted to one of their own stratagems to rid himself of this annoyance. He divided his cavalry into two or three small parties, and concealed them among some thick shrubbery which fringed both sides of the road. The rest of the army continued its march. The Mexicans followed, unsuspicious of the ambuscade, when the horse, suddenly darting from their place of concealment, threw the enemy's flanks into confusion, and the retreating columns of infantry, facing about suddenly, commenced a brisk attack, which completed their consternation. It was a broad and level plan, over which the panic-struck Mexicans made the best of their way, without attempting resistance; while the cavalry, riding them down and piercing the fugitives with their lances, followed up the chase for several miles, in what Cortés calls a truly beautiful style.[9] The army experienced no further annoyance from the enemy.

On their arrival at Tezcuco, they were greeted with joy by their comrades, who had received no tidings of them during the fortnight which had elapsed since their departure. The Tlascalans, immediately on their return, requested the general's permission to carry back to their own country the valuable booty which they had gathered in their foray,—a request, which, however unpalatable, he could not refuse.[10]

[9] "Y comenzámos á lanzear en ellos, y duró el alcanze cerca de dos leguas todas llanas, como la palma, que fué muy hermosa cosa." Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, p. 212.

[10] For the particulars of this expedition of Cortés, see, besides his own Commentaries so often quoted, Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib 33. cap.

The troops had not been in quarters more than two or three days, when an embassy arrived from Chalco, again soliciting the protection of the Spaniards against the Mexicans, who menaced them from several points in their neighborhood. But the soldiers were so much exhausted by unintermitted vigils, forced marches, battles, and wounds, that Cortés wished to give them a breathing time to recruit, before engaging in a new expedition. He answered the application of the Chalcans, by sending his missives to the allied cities, calling on them to march to the assistance of their confederate. It is not to be supposed, that they could comprehend the import of his despatches. But the paper, with its mysterious characters, served for a warrant to the officer who bore it, as the interpreter of the general's commands.

But, although these were implicitly obeyed, the Chalcans felt the danger so pressing, that they soon repeated their petition for the Spaniards to come in person to their relief. Cortés no longer hesitated; for he was well aware of the importance of Chalco, not merely on its own account, but from its position, which commanded one of the great avenues to Tlascala, and to Vera Cruz, the intercourse with which should run no risk of interruption. Without further loss of time, therefore, he detached a body of three hundred Spanish foot and twenty horse, under the command of Sandoval, for the protection of the city.

That active officer soon presented himself before Chalco, and, strengthened by the reinforcement of its own troops and those of the confederate towns, directed his first operations against Huaxtepec, a place of some importance, lying five leagues or more to the south among the mountains. It was held by a strong Mexican force, watching their opportunity to make a descent upon Chalco. The Spaniards found the enemy drawn up at a distance from the town, prepared to receive them. The ground was broken and tangled with bushes, unfavorable to the cavalry, which, in consequence, soon fell into disorder; and Sandoval, finding himself embarrassed by their movements, ordered them, after sustaining some loss, from the field. In their place he brought up his musketeers and crossbow-men, who poured a rapid fire into the thick columns of the Indians. The rest of the infantry, with sword and pike, charged the flanks of the enemy, who, bewildered by the shock, after sustaining considerable slaughter, fell back in an irregular manner, leaving the field of battle to the Spaniards.

The victors proposed to bivouac there, for the night. But,

20,—Torquemada, Monarch. Ind., lib. 4, cap. 85,—Gomara, Crónica, cap. 125,—Ixtlilxochitl, Venida de los Esp., pp. 13, 14,—Bernal Diaz Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 141.

while engaged in preparations for their evening meal, they were aroused by the cry of "To arms, to arms! the enemy is upon us!" In an instant, the trooper was in his saddle, the soldier grasped his musket or his good Toledo, and the action was renewed with greater fury than before. The Mexicans had received a reinforcement from the city. But their second attempt was not more fortunate than their first; and the victorious Spaniards, driving their antagonists before them, entered and took possession of the town itself, which had already been evacuated by the inhabitants.[11]

Sandoval took up his quarters in the dwelling of the lord of the place, surrounded by gardens, which rivalled those of Iztapalapan in magnificence, and surpassed them in extent. They are said to have been two leagues in circumference, having pleasure houses, and numerous tanks stocked with various kinds of fish; and they were embellished with trees, shrubs and plants, native and exotic, some selected for their beauty and fragrance, others for their medicinal properties. They were scientifically arranged; and the whole establishment displayed a degree of horticultural taste and knowledge, of which it would not have been easy to find a counterpart, at that day, in the more civilized communities of Europe.[12] Such is the testimony not only of the rude Conquerors, but of men of science, who visited these beautiful repositories in the day of their glory.[13]

After halting two days to refresh his forces in this agreeable spot, Sandoval marched on Jacapichtla, about twelve miles to the eastward. It was a town, or rather fortress, perched on a rocky eminence, almost inaccessible from its steepness. It was garrisoned by a Mexican force, who rolled down on the assailants, as they attempted to scale the heights, huge fragments of

[11] Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, pp. 214, 215.—Gomara, Crónica, cap. 146.—Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 142.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33. cap. 21.

[12] "La qual Huerta," says Cortés, who afterwards passed a day there, "es la mayor, y mas hermosa, y fresca, que nunca se vió, porque tiene dos leguas de circuito, y por medio de ella va una muy gentil Ribera de Agua, y de trecho á trecho, cantidad de dos tiros de Ballesta, hay Aposentamientos, y Jardines muy frescos, y infinitos Arboles de diversas Frutas, y muchas Yervas, y Flores olorosas, que cierto es cosa de admiracion ver la gentileza, y grandeza de toda esta Huerta." (Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, pp. 221, 222.) Bernal Diaz is not less emphatic in his admiration. Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 142.

[13] The distinguished naturalist, Hernandez, has frequent occasion to notice this garden, which furnished him with many specimens for his great work. It had the good fortune to be preserved after the Conquest, when particular attention was given to its medicinal plants, for the use of a great hospital established in the neighborhood. See Clavigero, Stor. del Messico, tom. II. p. 153.

rock, which, thundering over the sides of the precipice, carried ruin and desolation in their path. The Indian confederates fell back in dismay from the attempt. But Sandoval, indignant that any achievement should be too difficult for a Spaniard, commanded his cavaliers to dismount, and, declaring that he "would carry the place or die in the attempt," led on his men with the cheering cry of "St. Iago."[14] With renewed courage, they now followed their gallant leader up the ascent, under a storm of lighter missiles, mingled with huge masses of stone, which, breaking into splinters, overturned the assailants, and made fearful havoc in their ranks. Sandoval, who had been wounded on the preceding day, received a severe contusion on the head, while more than one of his brave comrades were struck down by his side. Still they clambered up, sustaining themselves by the bushes or projecting pieces of rock, and seemed to force themselves onward as much by the energy of their wills, as by the strength of their bodies.

After incredible toil, they stood on the summit, face to face with the astonished garrison. For a moment they paused to recover breath, than sprang furiously on their foes. The struggle was short, but desperate. Most of the Aztecs were put to the sword. Some were thrown headlong over the battlements, and others, letting themselves down the precipice, were killed on the borders of a little stream that wound round its base, the waters of which were so polluted with blood, that the victors were unable to slack their thirst with them for a full hour![15]

Sandoval, having now accomplished the object of his expedition, by reducing the strongholds which had so long held the Chalcans in awe, returned in triumph to Tezcuco. Meanwhile, the Aztec emperor, whose vigilant eye had been attentive to all that had passed, thought that the absence of so many of its warriors afforded a favorable opportunity for recovering Chalco. He sent a fleet of boats, for this purpose, across the lake, with a numerous force under the command of some of his most valiant chiefs.[16] Fortunately the absent Chalcans reached

[14] "E como esto vió el dicho Alguacil Mayor, y los Españoles, determináron demorir, ó subilles por fuerza á lo alto del Pueblo, y con el apellido de *Señor Santiago*, comenzáron á subir." Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 214.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 21.

[15] So says the *Conquistador*. (Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, p. 215.) Diaz, who will allow no one to hyperbolize but himself, says, "For as long as one might take to say an Ave Maria!" (Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 142.) Neither was present.

[16] The gallant Captain Diaz, who effects a sobriety in his own estimates, which often leads him to disparage those of the chaplain, Gomara, says, that the force consisted of 20,000 warriors in 2000 canoes. Ibid., loc. cit.

their city before the arrival of the enemy; but, though supported by their Indian allies, they were so much alarmed by the magnitude of the hostile array, that they sent again to the Spaniards, invoking their aid.

The messengers arrived at the same time with Sandoval and his army. Cortés was much puzzled by the contradictory accounts. He suspected some negligence in his lieutenant, and displeased with his precipitate return in this unsettled state of the affair, ordered him back at once, with such of his forces as were in fighting condition. Sandoval felt deeply injured by this proceeding, but he made no attempt at exculpation, and, obeying his commander in silence, put himself at the head of his troops, and made a rapid countermarch on the Indian city.[17]

Before he reached it, a battle had been fought between the Mexicans and the confederates, in which the latter, who had acquired unwonted confidence from their recent successes, were victorious. A number of Aztec nobles fell into their hands in the engagement, whom they delivered to Sandoval to be carried off as prisoners to Tezcuco. On his arrival there, the cavalier, wounded by the unworthy treatment he had received, retired to his own quarters without presenting himself before his chief.

During his absence, the inquiries of Cortés had satisfied him of his own precipitate conduct, and of the great injustice he had done his lieutenant. There was no man in the army, on whose services he set so high a value, as the responsible situations in which he had placed him plainly showed; and there was none, for whom he seemed to have entertained a greater personal regard. On Sandoval's return, therefore, Cortés instantly sent to request his attendance; when, with a soldier's frankness, he made such an explanation, as soothed the irritated spirit of the cavalier,—a matter of no great difficulty, as the latter had too generous a nature, and too earnest a devotion to his commander and the cause in which they were embarked, to harbor a petty feeling of resentment in his bosom.[18]

During the occurrence of these events, the work was going forward actively on the canal, and the brigantines were within a fortnight of their completion. The greatest vigilance was required, in the meantime, to prevent their destruction by the enemy, who had already made three ineffectual attempts to burn

[17] "El Cortés no le quiso escuchar á Sandoual de enojo, creyendo que por su culpa, ó descuido, recibiã mala obra nuestros amigos los de Chalco; y luego sin mas dilacion, ni le oyr, le mandó bolver." Ibid., ubi supra.

[18] Besides the authorities already quoted for Sandoval's expedition, see Gomara, Crónica, cap. 126,—Ixtlilxochitl, Hist. Chich., MS., cap. 92,—Torquemado, Monarch. Ind., lib. 4 cap. 86.

them on the stocks. The precautions, which Cortés thought it necessary to take against the Tezcucans themselves, added not a little to his embarrassment.

At this time he received embassies from different Indian states, some of them on the remote shores of the Mexican Gulf, tending their allegiance and soliciting his protection. For this he was partly indebted to the good offices of Ixtlilxochitl, who, in consequence of his brother's death, was now advanced to the sovereignty of Tezcuco. This important position greatly increased his consideration and authority through the country, of which he freely availed himself to bring the natives under the dominion of the Spaniards.[19]

The general received also at this time the welcome intelligence of the arrival of three vessels at Villa Rica, with two hundred men on board, well provided with arms and ammunition, and with seventy or eighty horses. It was a most seasonable reinforcement. From what quarter it came is uncertain; most probably, from Hispaniola. Cortés, it may be remembered, had sent for supplies to that place; and the authorities of the island, who had general jurisdiction over the affairs of the colonies, had shown themselves, on more than one occasion, well inclined towards him, probably considering him, under all circumstances, as better fitted than any other man to achieve the conquest of the country.[20]

The new recruits soon found their way to Tezcuco; as the communications with the port were now open and unobstructed. Among them were several cavaliers of consideration, one of whom, Julian de Alderete, the royal treasurer, came over to superintend the interests of the Crown.

There was also in the number a Dominican friar, who brought a quantity of pontifical bulls, offering indulgencies to those engaged in war against the infidel. The soldiers were not slow to

[19] "Ixtlilxochitl procuraba siempre traer á la devocion y amistad de los Cristianos no tan solamente á los de el Reyno de Tezcuco sino aun los de las Provincias remotas, rogándoles que todos se procurasen dar de paz al Capitan Cortés, y que aunque de las guerras pasadas algunos tuviesen culpa, era tan afable y deseaba tanto la paz que luego al punto los reciviria en su amistad." Ixtlilxochitl, Hist. Chich., MS., cap. 92.

[20] Cortés speaks of these vessels, as coming at the same time, but does not intimate from what quarter. (Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, p. 216.) Bernal Diaz, who notices only one, says it came from Castile. (Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 143.) But the old soldier wrote long after the events he commemorates, and may have confused the true order of things. It seems hardly probable that so important a reinforcement should have arrived from Castile, considering that Cortés had yet received none of the royal patronage, or even sanction, which would stimulate adventurers in the mother country to enlist under his standard.

fortify themselves with the good graces of the Church; and the worthy father, after driving a prosperous traffic with his spiritual wares, had the satisfaction to return home, at the end of a few months, well freighted, in exchange, with the more substantial treasures of the Indies.[21]

[21] Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 143.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 21.—Herrera. Hist. General, dec. 3, lib. 1, cap. 6.

CHAPTER III.

SECOND RECONNOITRING EXPEDITION.—ENGAGEMENTS ON THE SIERRA.—CAPTURE OF CUERNAVACA.—BATTLES AT XOCHIMILCO.—NARROW ESCAPE OF CORTES.—HE ENTERS TACUBA.

1521.

NOTWITHSTANDING the relief which had been afforded to the people of Chalco, it was so ineffectual, that envoys from that city again arrived at Tezcuco, bearing a hieroglyphical chart, on which were depicted several strong places in their neighborhood, garrisoned by the Aztecs, from which they expected annoyance. Cortés determined, this time, to take the affair into his own hands, and to scour the country so effectually, as to place Chalco, if possible, in a state of security. He did not confine himself to this object, but proposed, before his return, to pass quite round the great lakes, and reconnoitre the country to the south of them, in the same manner as he had before done to the west. In the course of his march, he would direct his arms against some of the strong places from which the Mexicans might expect support in the siege. Two or three weeks must elapse before the completion of the brigantines; and, if no other good resulted from the expedition, it would give active occupation to his troops, whose turbulent spirits might fester into discontent in the monotonous existence of a camp.

He selected for the expedition thirty horse and three hundred Spanish infantry, with a considerable body of Tlascalan and Tezcucan warriors. The remaining garrison he left in charge of the trusty Sandoval, who, with the friendly lord of the capital, would watch over the construction of the brigantines, and protect them from the assaults of the Aztecs.

On the fifth of April he began his march, and on the following day arrived at Chalco, where he was met by a number of the confederate chiefs. With the aid of his faithful interpreters, Doña Marina and Aguilar, he explained to them the objects of his present expedition; stated his purpose soon to enforce the blockade of Mexico, and required their coöperation with the

whole strength of their levies. To this they readily assented; and he soon received a sufficient proof of their friendly disposition in the forces which joined him on the march, amounting, according to one of the army, to more than had ever before followed his banner.[1]

Taking a southerly direction, the troops, after leaving Chalco, struck into the recesses of the wild sierra, which, with its bristling peaks, serves as a formidable palisade to fence round the beautiful Valley; while, within its rugged arms, it shuts up many a green and fruitful pasture of its own. As the Spaniards passed through its deep gorges, they occasionally wound round the base of some huge cliff or rocky eminence, on which the inhabitants had built their towns, in the same manner as was done by the people of Europe in the feudal ages; a position, which, however favorable to the picturesque, intimates a sense of insecurity as the cause of it, which may reconcile us to the absence of this striking appendage of the landscape in our own more fortunate country.

The occupants of these airy pinnacles took advantage of their situation, to shower down stones and arrows on the troops, as they defiled through the narrow passes of the sierra. Though greatly annoyed by their incessant hostilities, Cortés held on his way, till, winding round the base of a castellated cliff, occupied by a strong garrison of Indians, he was so severely pressed, that he felt, to pass on without chastising the aggressors would imply a want of strength, which must disparage him in the eyes of his allies. Halting in the valley, therefore, he detached a small body of light troops to scale the heights, while he remained with the main body of the army below, to guard against surprise from the enemy.

The lower region of the rocky eminence was so steep, that the soldiers found it no easy matter to ascend, scrambling, as well as they could, with hand and knee. But, as they came into the more exposed view of the garrison, the latter rolled down huge masses of rock, which, bounding along the declivity, and breaking into fragments, crushed the foremost assailants, and mangled their limbs in a frightful manner. Still they strove to work their way upward, now taking advantage of some gulley, worn by the winter torrent, now sheltering themselves behind a projecting cliff, or some straggling tree, anchored among the crevices of the mountain. It was all in vain. For no sooner did they

[1] "Viniéron tantos, que en todas las entradas que yo auia ido, despues que en la Nueva España entré, nunca ví tanta gente de guerra de nuestros amigos, como aora fuéron en nuestra compañía." Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 144.

emerge again into open view, than the rocky avalanche thundered on their heads with a fury, against which steel helm and cuirass were as little defence as gossamer. All the party were more or less wounded. Eight of the number were killed on the spot,—a loss the little band could ill afford,—and the gallant ensign, Corral, who led the advance, saw the banner in his hand torn into shreds.[2] Cortés, at length, convinced of the impracticability of the attempt, at least without a more severe loss than he was disposed to incur, commanded a retreat. It was high time; for a large body of the enemy were on full march across the valley to attack him.

He did not wait for their approach, but, gathering his broken files together, headed his cavalry, and spurred boldly against them. On the level plain, the Spaniards were on their own ground. The Indians, unable to sustain the furious onset, broke, and fell back before it. The flight soon became a rout, and the fiery cavaliers, dashing over them at full gallop, or running them through with their lances, took some revenge for their late discomfiture. The pursuit continued for some miles, till the nimble foe made their escape into the rugged fastnesses of the sierra, where the Spaniards did not care to follow. The weather was sultry, and, as the country was nearly destitute of water, the men and horses suffered extremely. Before evening they reached a spot overshadowed by a grove of wild mulberry trees, in which some scanty springs afforded a miserable supply to the army.

Near the place rose another rocky summit of the sierra, garrisoned by a stronger force than the one which they had encountered in the former part of the day; and at no great distance stood a second fortress at a still greater height, though considerably smaller than its neighbor. This was also tenanted by a body of warriors, who, as well as those of the adjoining cliff, soon made active demonstration of their hostility by pouring down missiles on the troops below. Cortés, anxious to retrieve the disgrace of the morning, ordered an assault on the larger, and, as it seemed, more practicable eminence. But, though two attempts were made with great resolution, they were repulsed with loss to the assailants. The rocky sides of the hill had been artificially cut and smoothed, so as greatly to increase the natural difficulties of the ascent. The shades of evening now closed around; and Cortés drew off his men to the mulberry grove, where he took up his bivouac for the night, deeply chagrined at having been twice foiled by the enemy on the same day.

[2] "Todos descalabrados, y corriendo sangre, y las vanderas rotas y ocho muertos." Ibid., ubi supra.

During the night, the Indian force, which occupied the adjoining height, passed over to their brethren, to aid them in the encounter, which they foresaw would be renewed on the following morning. No sooner did the Spanish general, at the break of day, become aware of this manœuvre, than, with his usual quickness, he took advantage of it. He detached a body of musketeers and crossbow-men to occupy the deserted eminence, purposing, as soon as this was done, to lead the assault in person against the other. It was not long before the Castilian banner was seen streaming from the rocky pinnacle, when the general instantly led up his men to the attack. And, while the garrison were meeting them resolutely on that quarter, the detachment on the neighboring heights poured into the place a well-directed fire, which so much distressed the enemy, that, in a very short time, they signified their willingness to capitulate.[3]

On entering the place, the Spaniards found that a plain of some extent ran along the crest of the sierra, and that it was tenanted, not only by men, but by women and their families, with their effects. No violence was offered by the victors to the property or persons of the vanquished, and the knowledge of this lenity induced the Indian garrison, who had made so stout a resistance on the morning of the preceding day, to tender their submission.[4]

After a halt of two days in this sequestered region, the army resumed its march in a south-westerly direction on Huaxtepec, the same city which had surrendered to Sandoval. Here they were kindly received by the cacique, and entertained in his magnificent gardens, which Cortés and his officers, who had not before seen them, compared with the best in Castile.[5] Still threading the wild mountain mazes, the army passed through Jauhtepec and several other places, which were abandoned at

[3] For the assault on the rocks,—the topography of which it is impossible to verify from the narratives of the Conquerors.—see Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 144,—Rel. Terc. de Cortès, ap. Lorenzana, pp. 218–221,—Gomara, Crónica, cap. 127,—Ixtlilxochitl, Venida de los Esp., pp. 16, 17,—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 21.

[4] Cortés, according to Bernal Diaz, ordered the troops, who took possession of the second fortress, "not to meddle with a grain of maize belonging to the besieged." Diaz, giving this a very liberal interpretation, proceeded forthwith to load his Indian *tamanes* with everything but maize, as fair booty. He was interrupted in his labors, however by the captain of the detachment, who gave a more narrow construction to his general's orders, much to the dissatisfaction of the latter, if we may trust the doughty chronicler. Ibid., ubi supra.

[5] "Adonde estaua la huerta que he dicho, que es la mejor que auia visto en toda mi vida, y ansí lo torno á dezir, que Cortés, y el Tesorero Alderete, desque entonces la viéron, y passeáron algo de ella, se admiráron, y dixéron, que mejor cosou de huerta no auian visto en Castilla." Ibid., loc. cit.

their approach. As the inhabitants, however, hung in armed bodies on their flanks and rear, doing them occasionally some mischief, the Spaniards took their revenge by burning the deserted towns.

Thus holding on their fiery track, they descended the bold slope of the Cordilleras, which, on the south, are far more precipitous than on the Atlantic side. Indeed, a single day's journey is sufficient to place the traveller on a level several thousand feet lower than that occupied by him in the morning; thus conveying him, in a few hours through the climates of many degrees of latitude. The route of the army led them across many an acre, covered with lava and blackened scoriæ, attesting the volcanic character of the region; though this was frequently relieved by patches of verdure, and even tracts of prodigal fertility, as if Nature were desirous to compensate by these extraordinary efforts for the course of barrenness, which elsewhere had fallen on the land. On the ninth day of their march, the troops arrived before the strong city of Quauhnahuac, or Cuernavaca, as since called by the Spaniards.[6] It was the ancient capital of the Tlahuicas, and the most considerable place for wealth and population in this part of the country. It was tributary to the Aztecs, and a garrison of this nation was quartered within its walls. The town was singularly situated, on a projecting piece of land, encompassed by *barrancas*, or formidable ravines, except on one side, which opened on a rich and well cultivated country. For, though the place stood at an elevation of between five and six thousand feet above the level of the sea, it had a southern exposure so sheltered by the mountain barrier on the north, that its climate was as soft and genial as that of a much lower region.

The Spaniards, on arriving before this city, the limit of their southerly progress, found themselves separated from it by one of the vast barrancas before noticed, which resembled one of those frightful rents not unfrequent in the Mexican Andes, the result, no doubt, of some terrible convulsion in earlier ages. The rocky sides of the ravine sunk perpendicularly down, and so bare as scarcely to exhibit even a vestige of the cactus, or of the other hardy plants with which Nature in these fruitful regions so gracefully covers up her deformities. The bottom of the

[6] This barbarous Indian name is tortured into all possible variations by the old chroniclers. The town soon received from the Spaniards the name which it now bears of Cuernavaca, and by which it is indicated on the modern maps. "Prevalse poi quello di *Cuernabaca*, col quale è presentemente conosciuta dagli Spagnuoli." Clavigero, Stor. del Messico, tom. III. p. 185, nota.

chasm, however, showed a striking contrast to this, being literally choked up with a rich and spontaneous vegetation; for the huge walls of rock, which shut in these barrancas, while they screen them from the cold winds of the Cordilleras, reflect the rays of a vertical sun, so as to produce an almost suffocating heat in the inclosure, stimulating the soil to the rank fertility of the *tierra caliente*. Under the action of this forcing apparatus,—so to speak,—the inhabitants of the towns on their margin above may with ease obtain the vegetable products which are to be found on the sultry level of the lowlands.

At the bottom of the ravine was seen a little stream, which, oozing from the stony bowels of the sierra, tumbled along its narrow channel, and contributed by its perpetual moisture to the exuberant fertility of the valley. This rivulet, which at certain seasons of the year was swollen to a torrent, was traversed, at some distance below the town, where the sloping sides of the barranca afforded a more practicable passage, by two rude bridges, both of which had been broken, in anticipation of the coming of the Spaniards. The latter had now arrived on the brink of the chasm, which intervened between them and the city. It was, as has been remarked, of no great width, and the army drawn up on its borders was directly exposed to the archery of the garrison, on whom its own fire made little impression, protected as they were by their defences.

The general, annoyed by his position, sent a detachment to seek a passage lower down, by which the troops might be landed on the other side. But, although the banks of the ravine became less formidable as they descended, they found no means of crossing the river, till a path unexpectedly presented itself, on which, probably, no one before had ever been daring enough to venture.

From the cliffs on the opposite sides of the barranca, two huge trees shot up to an enormous height, and, inclining towards each other, interlaced their boughs so as to form a sort of natural bridge. Across this avenue, in mid air, a Tlascalan conceived it would not be difficult to pass to the opposite bank. The bold mountaineer succeeded in the attempt, and was soon followed by several others of his countrymen, trained to feats of agility and strength among their native hills. The Spaniards imitated their example. It was a perilous effort for an armed man to make his way over this aërial causeway, swayed to and fro by the wind, where the brain might become giddy, and where a single false movement of hand or foot would plunge him in the abyss below. Three of the soldiers lost their hold and fell. The rest, consisting of some twenty or thirty Spaniards, and a

considerable number of Tlascalans, alighted in safety on the other bank.[7] There hastily forming, they marched with all speed on the city. The enemy, engaged in their contest with the Castilians on the opposite brink of the ravine, were taken by surprise,—which, indeed, could scarcely have been exceeded, if they had seen their foe drop from the clouds on the field of battle.

They made a brave resistance, however, when fortunately the Spaniards succeeded in repairing one of the dilapidated bridges in such a manner as to enable both cavalry and foot to cross the river, though with much delay. The horse, under Olid and Andres de Tapia, instantly rode up to the succor of their countrymen. They were soon followed by Cortés at the head of the remaining battalions, and the enemy driven from one point to another, were compelled to evacuate the city, and to take refuge among the mountains. The buildings in one quarter of the town were speedily wrapped in flames. The place was abandoned to pillage, and, as it was one of the most opulent marts in the country, it amply compensated the victors for the toil and danger they had encountered. The trembling caciques, returning soon after to the city, appeared before Cortés, and, deprecating his resentment, by charging the blame, as usual, on the Mexicans, threw themselves on his mercy. Satisfied with their submission, he allowed no further violence to the inhabitants.[8]

Having thus accomplished the great object of his expedition across the mountains, the Spanish commander turned his face northwards, to recross the formidable barrier which divided him from the Valley. The ascent, steep and laborious, was rendered still more difficult by fragments of rock and loose stones, which encumbered the passes. The mountain sides and summits were shaggy with thick forests of pine and stunted oak, which threw a melancholy gloom over the region, still further heightened at the present day by its being a favorite haunt of banditti.

The weather was sultry, and, as the stony soil was nearly des-

[7] The stout-hearted Diaz was one of those who performed this dangerous feat, though his head swam so, as he tells us, that he scarcely knew how he got on. "Porque de mí digo, que verdaderamẽte quando passaua, q lo ví mui peligroso, é malo de passar, y se me desvanecia la cabeça, y todavía passé yo, y otros veinte, ó treinta soldados, y muchos Tlascaltecas." Ibid., ubi supra.

[8] For the preceding account of the capture of Cuernavaca, see Bernal Diaz, ubi supra.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 21,—Ixtlilxochitl, Hist. Chich., MS., cap. 93,—Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 3, lib. 1, cap. 8.—Torquemada, Monarch. Ind., lib. 4. cap. 87,—Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, pp. 223, 224.

titute of water, the troops suffered severely from thirst. Several of them, indeed, fainted on the road, and a few of the Indian allies perished from exhaustion.[9] The line of march must have taken the army across the eastern shoulder of the mountain, called the *Cruz del Marques*, or Cross of the Marquess, from a huge stone cross, erected there to indicate the boundary of the territories granted by the Crown to Cortés, as Marquess of the Valley. Much, indeed, of the route lately traversed by the troops lay across the princely domain subsequently assigned to the Conqueror.[10]

The Spaniards were greeted from these heights with a different view from any which they had before had of the Mexican Valley, made more attractive in their eyes, doubtless, by contrast with the savage scenery in which they had lately been involved. It was its most pleasant and populous quarter, for nowhere did its cities and villages cluster together in such numbers as round the lake of sweet water. From whatever quarter seen, however, the enchanting region presented the same aspect of natural beauty and cultivation, with its flourishing villas, and its fair lake in the centre, whose dark and polished surface glistened like a mirror, deep set in the huge framework of porphyry, in which nature had enclosed it.

The point of attack selected by the general was Xochimilco, or "the field of flowers," as its name implies, from the floating gardens which rode at anchor, as it were, on the neighboring waters.[11] It was one of the most potent and wealthy cities in the Valley, and a stanch vassal of the Aztec crown. It stood, like the capital itself, partly in the water, and was approached in that quarter by causeways of no great length. The town was composed of houses like those of most other places of like magnitude in the country, mostly of cottages or huts made of clay and the light bamboo, mingled with aspiring *teocallis*, and edifices of stone, belonging to the more opulent classes.

As the Spaniards advanced, they were met by skirmishing parties of the enemy, who, after dismissing a light volley of

[9] "Una Tierra de Pinales, despoblada, y sin ninguna agua, laqual y un Puerto pasámos con grandíssimo trabajo, y sin beber: tanto, que muchos de los Indios que iban con nosotros pereciéron de sed." Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 224.

[10] The city of Cuernavaca was comprehended in the patrimony of the dukes of Monteleone, descendants and heirs of the *Conquistador*.—The Spaniards, in their line of march towards the north, did not deviate far, probably, from the great road which now leads from Mexico to Acapulco, still exhibiting in this upper portion of it the same characteristic features as at the period of the Conquest.

[11] Clavigero, Stor. del Messico, tom. III. p. 187, nota.

arrows, rapidly retreated before them. As they took the direction of Xochimilco, Cortés inferred that they were prepared to resist him in considerable force. It exceeded his expectations.

On traversing the principal causeway, he found it occupied, at the further extremity, by a numerous body of warriors, who, stationed on the opposite side of a bridge, which had been broken, were prepared to dispute his passage. They had constructed a temporary barrier of palisades, which screened them from the fire of the musketry. But the water in its neighborhood was very shallow, and the cavaliers and infantry, plunging into it, soon made their way, swimming or wading, as they could in face of a storm of missiles, to the landing near the town. Here they closed with the enemy, and, hand to hand, after a sharp struggle, drove them back on the city; a few, however, taking the direction of the open country, were followed up by the cavalry. The great mass, hotly pursued by the infantry, were driven through street and lane, without much further resistance. Cortés, with a few followers, disengaging himself from the tumult, remained near the entrance of the city. He had not been there long, when he was assailed by a fresh body of Indians, who suddenly poured into the place from a neighboring dike. The general, with his usual fearlessness, threw himself into the midst, in hopes to check their advance. But his own followers were too few to support him, and he was overwhelmed by the crowd of combatants. His horse lost his footing and fell; and Cortés, who received a severe blow on the head before he could rise, was seized and dragged off in triumph by the Indians. At this critical moment, a Tlascalan, who perceived the general's extremity, sprang, like one of the wild ocelots of his own forests, into the midst of the assailants, and endeavored to tear him from their grasp. Two of the general's servants also speedily came to the rescue, and Cortés, with their aid and that of the brave Tlascalan, succeeded in regaining his feet, and shaking off his enemies. To vault into the saddle and brandish his good lance was but the work of a moment. Others of his men quickly came up and the clash of arms reaching the ears of the Spaniards, who had gone in pursuit, they returned, and, after a desperate conflict, forced the enemy from the city. Their retreat, however, was intercepted by the cavalry, returning from the country, and, thus hemmed in between the opposite columns, they were cut to pieces, or saved themselves only by plunging into the lake.[12]

[12] Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 226.—Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 3, lib. 1, cap. 8.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap 21.

This is the general's own account of the matter. Diaz, however, says, that he was indebted for his rescue to a Castilian, named Olea, supported by

This was the the greatest personal danger which Cortés had yet encountered. His life was in the power of the barbarians, and, had it not been for their eagerness to take him prisoner, he must undoubtedly have lost it. To the same cause may be frequently attributed the preservation of the Spaniards in these engagements. The next day, he sought, it is said, for the Tlascalan who came so boldly to his rescue, and, as he could learn nothing of him, he gave the credit of his preservation to his patron, St. Peter.[13] He may well be excused for presuming the interposition of his good Genius, to shield him from the awful doom of the captive,—a doom not likely to be mitigated in his case. That heart must have been a bold one, indeed, which, from any motive, could voluntarily encounter such a peril! Yet his followers did as much, and that, too, for a much inferior reward.

The period which we are reviewing was still the age of chivalry; that stirring and adventurous age, of which we can form little conception in the present day of sober, practical reality. The Spaniard, with his nice point of honor, high romance, and proud, vainglorious vaunt, was the true representative of that age. The Europeans, generally, had not yet learned to accommodate themselves to a life of literary toil, or to the drudgery of trade, or the patient tillage of the soil. They left these to the hooded inmate of the cloister, the humble burgher, and the miserable serf. Arms was the only profession worthy of gentle blood,—the only career which the high-mettled cavalier could tread with honor. The New World, with its strange and mysterious perils, afforded a noble theatre for the exercise of his calling; and the Spaniard entered on it with all the enthusiasm of a paladin of romance.

Other nations entered on it also, but with different motives. The French sent forth their missionaries to take up their dwelling among the heathen, who, in the good work of winning souls to Paradise, were content to wear—nay, sometimes seemed to court—the crown of martyrdom. The Dutch, too, had their mission, but it was one of worldly lucre, and they found a recompense for toil and suffering in their gainful traffic with the natives. While our own Puritan fathers, with the true Anglo-Saxon spirit, left their pleasant homes across the waters, and

some Tlascalans, and that his preserver received three severe wounds himself, on the occasion. (Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 145.) This was an affair, however, in which Cortés ought to be better informed than any one else, and one, moreover, not likely to slip his memory. The old soldier has probably confounded it with another and similar adventure of his commander.

[13] "Otro Dia buscó Cortés al Indio, que le socorrió, i muerto, ni vivo no pareció; i Cortés, por la devocion de San Pedro, juzgó que él le avia aiudado." Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 3, lib. 1, cap. 8.

pitched their tents in the howling wilderness, that they might enjoy the sweets of civil and religious freedom. But the Spaniard came over to the New World in the true spirit of a knight-errant, courting adventure however perilous, wooing danger, as it would seem, for its own sake. With sword and lance, he was ever read to do battle for the Faith; and, as he raised his old war-cry of "St. Jago," he fancied himself fighting under the banner of the military apostle, and felt his single arm a match for more than a hundred infidels!—It was the expiring age of chivalry: and Spain, romantic Spain, was the land where its light lingered longest above the horizon.

It was not yet dusk when Cortés and his followers reëntered the city; and the general's first act was to ascend a neighboring *teocalli* and reconnoitre the surrounding country. He there beheld a sight which might have troubled a bolder spirit than his. The surface of the salt lake was darkened with canoes, and the causeway, for many a mile, with Indian squadrons, apparently on their march towards the Christian camp. In fact, no sooner had Guatemozin been apprized of the arrival of the white men at Xochimilco, than he mustered his levies in great force to relieve the city. They were now on their march, and, as the capital was but four leagues distant, would arrive soon after nightfall.[14]

Cortés made active preparations for the defence of his quarters. He stationed a corps of pikemen along the landing where the Aztecs would be likely to disembark. He doubled the sentinels, and, with his principal officers, made the rounds repeatedly in the course of the night. In addition to other causes for watchfulness, the bolts of the crossbow-men were nearly exhausted, and the archers were busily employed in preparing and adjusting shafts to the copper heads, of which great store had been provided for the army. There was little sleep in the camp that night.[15]

It passed away, however, without molestation from the enemy. Though not stormy, it was exceedingly dark. But, although the Spaniards on duty could see nothing, they distinctly heard the sound of many oars in the water, at no great distance from the

[14] "Por el Agua á una muy grande flota de Canoas, que creo, que pasaban de dos mil; y en ellas venian mas de doce mil Hombres de Guerra; é por la Tierra llegó tanta multitude de Gente, que todos los Campos cubrian." Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 227.

[15] "Y acordôse que huviesse mui buena vela en todo nuestre Real, repartida á los puertos, é azequias por donde auian de venir á desembarcar, y los de acauallo mui á punto toda la noche ensillados y enfrenados, aguardando en la calçada, y tierra firme, y todos los Capitanes, y Cortés con ellos, haziendo vela y ronda toda la noche." Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 145.

shore. Yet those on board the canoes made no attempt to land, distrusting, or advised, it may be, of the preparations made for their reception. With early dawn, they were under arms, and without waiting for the movement of the Spaniards, poured into the city and attacked them in their own quarters.

The Spaniards, who were gathered in the area round one of the *teocallis*, were taken at disadvantage in the town, where the narrow lanes and streets, many of them covered with a smooth and slippery cement, offered obvious impediments to the manœuvres of cavalry. But Cortés hastily formed his musketeers and crossbow-men, and poured such a lively, well-directed fire into the enemy's ranks, as threw him into disorder, and compelled him to recoil. The infantry, with their long pikes, followed up the blow; and the horse, charging at full speed, as the retreating Aztecs emerged from the city, drove them several miles along the main land.

At some distance, however, they were met by a strong reinforcement of their countrymen, and, rallying, the tide of battle turned, and the cavaliers, swept along by it, gave the rein to their steeds, and rode back at full gallop towards the town. They had not proceeded very far, when they came upon the main body of the army, advancing rapidly to their support. Thus strengthened, they once more returned to the charge, and the rival hosts met together in full career, with the shock of an earthquake. For a time, victory seemed to hang in the balance as the mighty press reeled to and fro under the opposite impulse, and a confused shout rose up towards heaven, in which the war-whoop of the savage was mingled with the battle-cry of the Christian,—a still stranger sound on these sequestered shores. But, in the end, Castilian valor, or rather Castilian arms and discipline, proved triumphant. The enemy faltered, gave way, and, recoiling step by step, the retreat soon terminated in a rout, and the Spaniards, following up the flying foe, drove them from the field, with such dreadful slaughter, that they made no further attempt to renew the battle.

The victors were now undisputed masters of the city. It was a wealthy place, well stored with Indian fabrics, cotton, gold, feather-work, and other articles of luxury and use, affording a rich booty to the soldiers. While engaged in the work of plunder, a party of the enemy, landing from their canoes, fell on some of the stragglers, laden with merchandise, and made four of them prisoners. It created a greater sensation among the troops than if ten times that number had fallen on the field. Indeed, it was rare that a Spaniard allowed himself to be taken alive. In the present instance the unfortunate men were taken

by surprise. They were hurried to the capital, and soon after sacrificed; when their arms and legs were cut off, by the command of the ferocious young chief of the Aztecs, and sent round to the different cities, with the assurance, that this should be the fate of the enemies of Mexico![16]

From the prisoners taken in the late engagement, Cortés learned, that the forces already sent by Guatemozin formed but a small part of his levies; that his policy was to send detachment after detachment, until the Spaniards, however victorious they might come off from the contest with each individually, would, in the end, succumb from mere exhaustion, and thus be vanquished, as it were, by their own victories.

The soldiers having now sacked the city, Cortés did not care to await further assaults from the enemy in his present quarters. On the fourth morning after his arrival, he mustered his forces on a neighboring plain. They came, many of them reeling under the weight of their plunder. The general saw this with uneasiness. They were to march, he said, through a populous country, all in arms to dispute their passage. To secure their safety, they should move as light and unencumbered as possible. The sight of so much spoil would sharpen the appetite of their enemies, and draw them on, like a flock of famished eagles after their prey. But his eloquence was lost on his men; who plainly told him they had a right to the fruit of their victories, and that what they had won with their swords, they knew well enough how to defend with them.

Seeing them thus bent on their purpose, the general did not care to balk their inclinations. He ordered the baggage to the centre, and placed a few of the cavalry over it; dividing the remainder between the front and rear, in which latter post, as that most exposed to attack, he also stationed his arquebusiers and crossbow-men. Thus prepared, he resumed his march; but first set fire to the combustible buildings of Xochimilco, in retaliation for the resistance he had met there.[17] The light of the

[16] Diaz, who had an easy faith, states, as a fact, that the limbs of the unfortunate men were cut off *before* their sacrifice. "Manda cortar pies y braços á los tristes nuestros compañeros, y las embia por muchos pueblos nuestros amigos de los q nos auian venido de paz, y les embia á dezir, que antes que bolvamos á Tezcuco, piensa no quedará ninguno de nosotros á vida, y con los coraçones y sangre hizo sacrificio á sus ídolas." (Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 145.)—This is not very probable. The Aztecs did not, like our North American Indians, torture their enemies from mere cruelty, but in comformity to the proscribed regulations of their ritual. The captive was a religious victim.

[17] "Y al cabo dejándola toda quemada y asolada nos partímos; y cierto era mucho para ver, porque tenia muchas Casas, y Torres de sus Idolos de cal y canto." Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana p. 228.

burning city streamed high into the air, sending its ominous glare far and wide across the waters, and telling the inhabitants on their margin, that the fatal strangers, so long predicted by their oracles, had descended like a consuming flame upon their borders.[18]

Small bodies of the enemy were seen occasionally at a distance, but they did not venture to attack the army on its march, which, before noon, brought them to Cojohuacan, a large town about two leagues distant from Xochimilco. One could scarcely travel that distance in this populous quarter of the Valley without meeting with a place of considerable size, oftentimes the capital of what had formerly been an independent state. The inhabitants, members of different tribes, and speaking dialects somewhat different, belonged to the same great family of nations, who had come from the real, or imaginary region of Aztlan, in the far North-west. Gathered round the shores of their Alpine sea, these petty communities continued, after their incorporation with the Aztec monarchy, to maintain a spirit of rivalry in their intercourse with one another, which—as with the cities on the Mediterranean, in the feudal ages—quickened their mental energies, and raised the Mexican Valley higher in the scale of civilization than most other quarters of Anahuac.

The town at which the army had now arrived was deserted by its inhabitants; and Cortés halted two days there to restore his troops, and give the needful attention to the wounded.[19] He made use of the time to reconnoitre the neighboring ground, and, taking with him a strong detachment, descended on the

[18] For others particulars of the actions at Xochimilco, see Oviedo, Hist. de. las Ind., MS., lib. 23, cap. 21,—Herrera, Hist General, dec. 3 lib. 1, cap. 8, 11,—Ixtlilxochitl, Venida de los Esp., p. 18,—Torquemada, Monarch. Ind., lib. 4, cap. 87, 88,—Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 145.

The Conqueror's own account of these engagements has not his usual perspicuity, perhaps from its brevity. A more than ordinary confusion, indeed, prevails in the different reports of them, even those proceeding from contemporaries, making it extremely difficult to collect a probable narrative from authorities, not only contradicting one another, but themselves. It is rare, at any time, that two accounts of a battle coincide in all respects; the range of observation for each individual is necessarily so limited and different, and it is so difficult to make a cool observation at all, in the hurry and heat of conflict. Any one, who has conversed with the survivors, will readily comprehend this, and be apt to conclude, that, wherever he may look for truth, it will hardly be on the battle-ground.

[19] This place, recommended by the exceeding beauty of its situation, became, after the Conquest, a favorite residence of Cortés, who founded a nunnery in it, and commanded in his will, that his bones should be removed thither, from any part of the world in which he might die. "Que mis huesos—los lleven á la mi Villa de Coyoacan, y allí les den tierra en el Monesterio de Monjas, que mando hacer y edificar en la dicha mi Villa." Testamento de Hernan Cortés, MS.

causeway which led from Cojohuacan to the great avenue of Iztapalapan.[20] At the point of intersection, called Xoloc, he found a strong barrier or fortification, behind which a Mexican force was intrenched. Their archery did some mischief to the Spaniards, as they came within bowshot. But the latter, marching intrepidly forward in face of the arrowy shower, stormed the works, and, after an obstinate struggle, drove the enemy from their position.[21] Cortés then advanced some way on the great causeway of Iztapalapan; but he beheld the further extremity darkened by a numerous array of warriors, and, as he did not care to engage in unnecessary hostilities, especially as his ammunition was nearly exhausted, he fell back and retreated to his own quarters.

The following day, the army continued its march, taking the road to Tacuba, but a few miles distant. On the way it experienced much annoyance from straggling parties of the enemy, who, furious at the sight of the booty which the invaders were bearing away, made repeated attacks on their flanks and rear. Cortés retaliated, as on the former expedition, by one of their own stratagems, but with less success than before; for, pursuing the retreating enemy too hotly, he fell with his cavalry into an ambuscade, which they had prepared for him in their turn. He was not yet a match for their wily tactics. The Spanish cavaliers were enveloped in a moment by their subtle foe, and separated from the rest of the army. But, spurring on their good steeds, and charging in a solid column together, they succeeded in breaking through the Indian array, and in making their escape, except two individuals, who fell into the enemy's hands. They were the general's own servants, who had followed him faithfully through the whole campaign, and he was deeply affected by their loss; rendered the more distressing by the consideration of the dismal fate that awaited them. When the little band rejoined the army, which had halted, in some anxiety at

[20] This, says archbishop Lorenzana, was the modern *calzada de la Piedad.* (Rel. Terc. de Cortés, p. 229, nota.) But it is not easy to reconcile this with the elaborate chart which M. de Humboldt has given of the Valley. A short arm, which reached from this city in the days of the Aztecs, touched obliquely the great southern avenue, by which the Spaniards first entered the capital. As the waters, which once entirely surrounded Mexico, have shrunk into their narrow basin, the face of the country has undergone a great change and, though the foundations of the principal causeways are still maintained, it is not always easy to discern vestiges of the ancient avenues.

[21] "Y llegámos á una Albarrada, que tenian hecha en la Calzada, y los Peones comenzáronla á combatir; y aunque fué muy recia, y hubo mucha resistencia, y hiriéron diez Españoles, al fin se la ganáron, y matáron muchos de los Enemigos, aunque los Ballesteros, y Escopeteros quedáron sin Pólvora, y sin Saetas." Ibid., ubi supra.

their absence, under the walls of Tacuba, the soldiers were astonished at the dejected mien of their commander, which too visibly betrayed his emotion.[22]

The sun was still high in the heavens, when they entered the ancient capital of the Tepanecs. The first care of Cortés was to ascend the principal *teocalli*, and survey the surrounding country. It was an admirable point of view, commanding the capital, which lay but little more than a league distant, and its immediate environs. Cortés was accompanied by Alderete, the treasurer, and some other cavaliers, who had lately joined his banner. The spectacle was still new to them; and, as they gazed on the stately city, with its broad lake covered with boats and barges hurrying to and fro, some laden with merchandise, or fruits and vegetables, for the markets of Tenochtitlan, others crowded with warriors, they could not withhold their admiration at the life and activity of the scene, declaring that nothing but the hand of Providence could have led their countrymen safe through the heart of this powerful empire.[23]

In the midst of the admiring circle, the brow of Cortés alone was observed to be overcast, and a sigh, which now and then stole audibly from his bosom, showed the gloomy working of his thoughts.[24] "Take comfort," said one of the cavaliers, approaching his commander, and wishing to console him in his rough way for his recent loss, "you must not lay these things so much to heart; it is, after all, but the fortune of war." The general's answer showed the nature of his meditations. "You are my witness," said he, "how often I have endeavored to persuade yonder capital peacefully to submit. It fills me with grief, when I think of the toil and the dangers my brave followers have yet to encounter before we can call it ours. But the time is come when we must put our hands to the work."[25]

[22] "Y estando en esto viene Cortés, con el qual nos alegrámos, puesto que él venia muy triste y como lloroso." Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 145.

[23] "Pues quando viéron la gran ciudad de México, y la laguna, y tanta multitud de canoas, que vnas ivan cargadas con bastimentos, y otras ivan à pescar, y otras valdías, mucho mas se espantáron, porque no las auian visto, hasta en aquella saçon: y dixéron, que nuestra venida en esta Nueva España, que no eran cosas de hombres humanos, sino que la gran misericordia de Dios era quiẽ nos sostenia." Ibid., ubi supra.

[24] "En este instante suspiró Cortés cõ vna muy grã tristeza, mui mayor q la q de antes traia." Ibid., loc. cit.

[25] "Y Cortés le dixo, que ya veia quantas vezes auia embiado á México á rogalles con la paz, y que la tristeza no la tenia por sola vna cosa, sino en pensar en los grandes trabajos en que nos auiamos de ber, hasta tornar á señorear; y que con la ayuda de Dios presto lo porniamos por la obra." Ibid., ubi supra.

There can be no doubt, that Cortes, with every other man in his army, felt he was engaged on a holy crusade, and that, independently of personal considerations, he could not serve Heaven better, than by planting the Cross on the blood-stained towers of the heathen metropolis. But it was natural that he should feel some compunction, as he gazed on the goodly scene, and thought of the coming tempest, and how soon the opening blossoms of civilization which there met his eye must wither under the rude breath of War. It was a striking spectacle, that of the great Conqueror, thus brooding in silence over the desolation he was about to bring on the land! It seems to have made a deep impression on his soldiers, little accustomed to such proofs of his sensibility; and it forms the burden of some of those *romances*, or national ballads, with which the Castilian minstrel, in the olden time, delighted to commemorate the favorite heroes of his country, and which, coming mid-way between oral tradition and chronicle, have been found as imperishable a record as chronicle itself.[26]

Tacuba was the point which Cortés had reached on his former expedition round the northern side of the Valley. He had now, therefore, made the entire circuit of the great lake; had reconnoitred the several approaches to the capital, and inspected with his own eyes the dispositions made on the opposite quarters for its defence. He had no occasion to prolong his stay in Tacuba, the vicinity of which to Mexico must soon bring on him its whole warlike population.

Early on the following morning, he resumed his march, taking the route pursued in the former expedition north of the small lakes. He met with less annoyance from the enemy, than on the preceding days; a circumstance owing in some degree, perhaps, to the state of the weather, which was exceedingly tempest-

[26] Diaz gives the opening *redondillas* of the *romance*, which I have not been able to find in any of the printed collections.

En Tacuba esta Cortes,
co su esquadron esforcado,
triste estaua, y muy penoso,
triste, y con gran cuidado,
la vna mano en la mexilla,
y la otra en el costado," &c.

It may be thus done into pretty literal doggerel.

In Tacuba stood Cortes,
With many a care opprest,
Thoughts of the past came o'er him,
And he bowed his haughty crest.
One hand upon his cheek he laid,
The other on his breast,
While his valiant squadrons round him, &c.

uous. The soldiers, with their garments heavy with moisture, ploughed their way with difficulty through miry roads flooded by the torrents. On one occasion, as their military chronicler informs us, the officers neglected to go the rounds of the camp, at night, and the sentinels to mount guard, trusting to the violence of the storm for their protection. Yet the fate of Narvaez might have taught them not to put their faith in the elements.

At Acolman, in the Acolhuan territory, they were met by Sandoval, with the friendly cacique of Tezcuco, and several cavaliers, among whom were some recently arrived from the Islands. They cordially greeted their countrymen, and communicated the tidings, that the canal was completed, and that the brigantines, rigged and equipped, were ready to be launched on the bosom of the lake. There seemed to be no reason, therefore, for longer postponing operations against Mexico. With this welcome intelligence, Cortés and his victorious legions made their entry for the last time into the Acolhuan capital, having consumed just three weeks in completing the circuit of the Valley.

CHAPTER IV.

Conspiracy in the Army.—Brigantines Launched.—Muster of Forces.—Execution of Xicotencatl.—March of the Army.—Beginning of the Siege.

1521.

At the very time when Cortés was occupied with reconnoitring the Valley, preparatory to his siege of the capital, a busy faction in Castile was laboring to subvert his authority and defeat his plans of conquest altogether. The fame of his brilliant exploits had spread not only through the Isles, but to Spain and many parts of Europe, where a general admiration was felt for the invincible energy of the man, who, with his single arm, as it were, could so long maintain a contest with the powerful Indian empire. The absence of the Spanish monarch from his dominions, and the troubles of the country, can alone explain the supine indifference shown by the government to the prosecution of this great enterprise. To the same causes it may be ascribed, that no action was had in regard to the suites of Velasquez and Narvaez, backed, as they were, by so potent an advocate as Bishop Fonseca, president of the Council of the Indies. The reins of government had fallen into the hands of Adrian of Utrecht, Charles's preceptor, and afterwards Pope,—a man of learning, and not without sagacity, but slow and timid in his policy, and altogether incapable of that decisive action which suited the bold genius of his predecessor, Cardinal Ximenes.

In the spring of 1521, however, a number of ordinances passed the Council of the Indies, which threatened an important innovation in the affairs of New Spain. It was decreed, that the Royal Audience of Hispaniola should abandon the proceedings already instituted against Narvaez, for his treatment of the commissioner Ayllon; that that unfortunate commander should be released from his confinement at Vera Cruz; and that an arbitrator should be sent to Mexico, with authority to investigate the affairs and conduct of Cortés, and to render ample justice to the governor of Cuba. There were not wanting persons at

court, who looked with dissatisfaction on these proceedings, as an unworthy requital of the services of Cortés, and who thought the present moment, at any rate, not the most suitable for taking measures, which might discourage the general, and, perhaps, render him desperate. But the arrogant temper of the bishop of Burgos overruled all objections; and the ordinances having been approved by the Regency, were signed by that body, April 11, 1521. A person named Tapia, one of the functionaries of the Audience at St. Domingo was selected as the new commissioner to be despatched to Vera Cruz. Fortunately circumstances occurred, which postponed the execution of the design for the present, and permitted Cortés to go forward unmolested in his career of conquest.[1]

But, while thus allowed to remain, for the present at least, in possession of authority, he was assailed by a danger nearer home, which menaced not only his authority, but his life. This was a conspiracy in the army, of a more dark and dangerous character than any hitherto formed there. It was set on foot by a common soldier, named Antonio Villafaña, a native of Old Castile, of whom nothing is known but his share in this transaction. He was one of the troop of Narvaez,—that leaven of disaffection, which had remained with the army, swelling with discontent on every light occasion, and ready, at all times, to rise into mutiny. They had voluntarily continued in the service, after the secession of their comrades at Tlascala; but it was from the same mercenary hopes with which they had originally embarked in the expedition,—and in these they were destined still to be disappointed. They had little of the true spirit of adventure, which distinguished the old companions of Cortés; and they found the barren laurels of victory but a sorry recompense for all their toils and sufferings.

With these men were joined others, who had causes of personal disgust with the general; and others, again, who looked with distrust on the result of the war. The gloomy fate of their countrymen, who had fallen into the enemy's hands, filled them with dismay. They felt themselves the victims of a chimerical spirit in their leader, who, with such inadequate means, was urging to extremity so ferocious and formidable a foe; and they shrunk with something like apprehension from thus pursuing the enemy into his own haunts, where he would gather tenfold energy from despair.

These men would have willingly abandoned the enterprise, and returned to Cuba; but how could they do it? Cortés had

[1] Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 3, lib. 1, cap. 15.—Relacion de Alonso de Verzara, Escrivano Público de Vera Cruz, MS., dec. 21.

control over the whole route from the city to the sea-coast ; and not a vessel could leave its ports without his warrant. Even if he were put out of the way, there were others, his principal officers, ready to step into his place, and avenge the death of their commander. It was necessary to embrace these, also, in the scheme of destruction ; and it was proposed, therefore, together with Cortés, to assassinate Sandoval, Olid, Alvarado, and two or three others most devoted to his interests. The conspirators would then raise the cry of liberty, and doubted not that they should be joined by the greater part of the army, or enough, at least, to enable them to work their own pleasure. They proposed to offer the command, on Cortés" death, to Francisco Verdugo, a brother-in-law of Velasquez. He was an honorable cavalier, and not privy to their design. But they had little doubt that he would acquiesce in the command, thus, in a manner, forced upon him, and this would secure them the protection of the governor of Cuba, who, indeed, from his own hatred of Cortés, would be disposed to look with a lenient eye on their proceedings.

The conspirators even went so far as to appoint the subordinate officers, an *alguacil mayor* in place of Sandoval, a quartermaster-general to succeed Olid, and some others.[2] The time fixed for the execution of the plot was soon after the return of Cortès from his expedition. A parcel, pretended to have come by a fresh arrival from Castile, was to be presented to him while at table, and, when he was engaged in breaking open the letters, the conspirators were to fall on him and his officers, and despatch them with their poniards. Such was the iniquitous scheme devised for the distruction of Cortés and expedition. But a conspiracy, to be successful, especially when numbers are concerned, should allow but little time to elapse between its conception and its execution.

On the day previous to that appointed for the perpetration of the deed, one of the party, feeling a natural compunction at the commission of the crime, went to the general's quarters, and solicited a private interview with him. He threw himself at his commander's feet, and revealed all the particulars relating to the conspiracy adding, that in Villafaña's possession a paper would be found, containing the names of his accomplices. Cortés, thunder-struck at the disclosure, lost not a moment in profiting by it. He sent for Alvarado, Sandoval, and one or two other officers marked out by the conspirator, and, after communicating

[2] " Haziā Alguazil mayor é Alférez, y Alcaldes, y Regidores, y Contador, y Tesorero, y Ueedor, y otras cosas deste arte, y aun repartido entre ellos nuestros bienes, y cauallos." Berñal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 146.

the affair to them, went at once with them to Villafana's quarters, attended by four alguacils.

They found him in conference with three or four friends, who were instantly taken from the apartment, and placed in custody. Villafana, confounded at this sudden apparition of his commander, had barely time to snatch a paper, containing the signatures of the confederates, from his bosom, and attempt to swallow it. But Cortés arrested his arm, and seized the paper. As he glanced his eye rapidly over the fatal list, he was much moved at finding there the names of more than one, who had some claim to consideration in the army. He tore the scroll in pieces, and ordered Villafana to be taken into custody. He was immediately tried by a military court hastily got together, at which the general himself presided. There seems to have been no doubt of the man's guilt. He was condemned to death, and, after allowing him time for confession and absolution, the sentence was executed by hanging him from the window of his own quarters.[3]

Those ignorant of the affair were astonished at the spectacle; and the remaining conspirators were filled with consternation, when they saw that their plot was detected, and anticipated a similar fate for themselves. But they were mistaken. Cortés pursued the matter no further. A little reflection convinced him, that to do so would involve him in the most disagreeable, and even dangerous, perplexities. And, however much the parties implicated in so foul a deed might deserve death, he could ill afford the loss even of the guilty, with his present limited numbers. He resolved, therefore, to content himself with the punishment of the ringleader.

He called his troops together, and briefly explained to them the nature of the crime for which Vallafana had suffered. He had made no confession, he said, and the guilty secret had perished with him. He then expressed his sorrow, that any should have been found in their ranks capable of so base an act, and stated his own unconsciousness of having wronged any individual among them; but, if he had done so, he invited them frankly to declare it, as he was most anxious to afford them all the redress in his power.[4]—But there was no one of his audience, whatever might be his grievances, who cared to enter his complaint at such a moment; least of all were the conspirators willing to do so, for they were too happy at having, as they fancied, escaped detection, to stand forward now in the ranks of the malcon-

[3] Ibid., loc. cit.—Oviedo Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap 48.—Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 3, lib. 1, cap. 1.

[4] Ibid., ubi supra.

tents. The affair passed off, therefore, without further consequences.

The conduct of Cortés, in this delicate conjuncture, shows great coolness, and knowledge of human nature. Had he suffered his detection, or even his suspicion, of the guilty parties to take air, it would have placed him in hostile relations with them for the rest of his life. It was a disclosure of this kind, in the early part of Louis the Eleventh's reign, to which many of the troubles of his later years were attributed.[5] The mask once torn away, there is no longer occasion to consult even appearances. The door seems to be closed against reform. The alienation, which might have been changed by circumstances, or conciliated by kindness, settles into a deep and deadly rancor. And Cortés would have been surrounded by enemies in his own camp, more implacable than those in the camp of the Aztecs.

As it was, the guilty soldiers had suffered too serious apprehensions to place their lives hastily in a similar jeopardy. They strove, on the contrary, by demonstrations of loyalty, and the assiduous discharge of their duties, to turn away suspicion from themselves. Cortés, on his part, was careful to preserve his natural demeanor, equally removed from distrust, and—what was perhaps more difficult—that studied courtesy, which intimates, quite as plainly, suspicion of the party who is the object of it. To do this required no little address. Yet he did not forget the past. He had, it is true, destroyed the scroll containing the list of the conspirators. But the man, that has once learned the names of those who have conspired against his life, has no need of a written record to keep them fresh in his memory. Cortés kept his eye on all their movements, and took care to place them in no situation, afterwards, where they could do him injury.[6]

This attempt on the life of their commander excited a strong sensation in the army, with whom his many dazzling qualities and brilliant military talents had made him a general favorite. They were anxious to testify their reprobation of so foul a deed, coming from their own body, and they felt the necessity of taking some effectual measures for watching over the safety of one,

[5] So says M. de Barante in his picturesque *rifacimento* of the ancient chronicles. "Les procès du connétable et de monsieur de Némours, bien d'autres révélations, avaient fait éclater leur mauvais vouloir, ou du moins leur peu de fidélité pour le roi; ils ne pouvaient donc douter qu'il désirât ou complotât leur ruine." Histoire des Ducs de Bourgogne, (Paris, 1838,) tom. XI. p. 169.

[6] "Y desde allí adelante, aunque mostraua gran voluntad á las personas que eran en la cõjuracio, siempre se rezelaua dellos." Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 146.

with whom their own destinies, as well as the fate of the enterprise, were so intimately connected. It was arranged, therefore, that he should be provided with a guard of soldiers, who were placed under the direction of a trusty cavalier named Antonio de Quiñones. They constituted the general's body-guard, during the rest of the compaign, watching over him day and night, and protecting him from domestic treason, no less than from the sword of the enemy.

As was stated at the close of the last Chapter, the Spaniards, on their return to quarters, found the construction of the brigantines completed, and that they were fully rigged, equipped, and ready for service. The canal, also, after having occupied eight thousand men for nearly two months, was finished.

It was a work of great labor; for it extended half a league in length, was twelve feet wide, and as many deep. The sides were strengthened by palisades of wood or solid masonry. At intervals, dams and locks were constructed, and part of the opening was through the hard rock. By this avenue the brigantines might now be safely introduced on the lake.[7]

Cortés was resolved that so auspicious an event should be celebrated with due solemnity. On the 28th of April, the troops were drawn up under arms, and the whole population of Tezcuco assembled to witness the ceremony. Mass was performed, and every man in the army, together with the general, confessed and received the sacrament. Prayers were offered up by father Olmedo, and a benediction invoked on the little navy, the first—worthy of the name—ever launched on American waters.[8] The signal was given by the firing of a cannon, when the vessels, dropping down the canal, one after another, reached the lake in good order; and, as they emerged on its ample bosom, with music sounding, and the royal ensign of Castile proudly floating from their masts, a shout of admiration arose from the countless multitudes of spectators, which mingled with the roar of artillery and musketry from the vessels and the shore![9] It was a novel spectacle to the simple natives; and

[7] Ixtlilxochitl, Venida de los Esp., p. 19.—Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 234.

"Obra grandíssima," exclaims the Conqueror; "y mucho para ver."—"Fuéron en guarde de estos bergantines," adds Camargo, "mas de diez mil hombres de guerra con los maestros dellas, hasta que los armáron y echáron en el agua y laguna de Méjico, que fué obra de mucho efecto para tomarse Méjico." Hist. de Tlascala, MS.

[8] The brigantines were still to be seen, preserved, as precious memorials, long after the Conquest, in the dockyards of Mexico. Toribio, Hist. de los Indios, MS., Parte I, cap. I.

[9] "Deda la señal, soltó la Presa, fuéron saliendo los Vergantines, sin

they gazed with wonder on the gallant ships, which, fluttering like sea-birds on their snowy pinions, bounded lightly over the waters, as if rejoicing in their element. It touched the stern hearts of the Conquerors with a glow of rapture, and, as they felt that Heaven had blessed their undertaking, they broke forth, by general accord, into the noble anthem of the *Te Deum*. But there was no one of that vast multitude for whom the sight had deeper interest than their commander. For he looked on it as the work, in a manner, of his own hands; and his bosom swelled with exultation, as he felt he was now possessed of a power strong enough to command the lake, and to shake the haughty towers of Tenochtitlan.[10]

The general's next step was to muster his forces in the great square of the capital. He found they amounted to eighty-seven horse, and eight hundred and eighteen foot, of which one hundred and eighteen were arquebusiers and crossbow-men. He had three large field-pieces of iron, and fifteen lighter guns or falconets of brass.[11] The heavier cannon had been transported from Vera Cruz to Tezcuco, a little while before, by the faithful Tlascalans. He was well supplied with shot and balls, with about ten hundred weight of powder, and fifty thousand copper-headed arrows, made after a pattern furnished by him to the natives.[12] The number and appointments of the army much exceeded what they had been at any time since the flight from Mexico, and showed the good effects of the late arrivals from the Islands. Indeed, taking the fleet into the account, Cortés had never before been in so good a condition for carrying on his operations. Three hundred of the men were sent to man the vessels, thirteen, or rather twelve, in number, one of the smallest having been found, on trial, too dull a sailer to be of service. Half of the crews were required to navigate the ships. There

tocar vno á otro, i apartándose por la Laguna, desplegáron las Vanderas, tocó la Música, disparáron su Artillería, respondió la del Exército, así de Castellanos, como de Indios." Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 3, lib. 1, cap. 6.

[10] Ibid., ubi supra.—Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 234.—Ixtlilxochitl, Venida de los Esp., p. 19.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 48.

The last-mentioned chronicler indulges in no slight swell of exultation at this achievement of his hero, which in his opinion throws into shade the boasted exploits of the great Sesostris. "Otras muchase é notables cosas, cuenta este actor que the dicho de aquest Rey Sesori, en que no me quiero detener, ni las tengo en tanto como esta tranchea, ó canja que es dicho, y los Vergantines de que tratamos, los quales diéron ocasion á que se oviesen mayores Thesoros é Provincias, é Reynos, que no tuvo Sesori, para la corona Real de Castilla por la industria de Hernando Cortés." Ibid., lib. 33, cap. 22.

[11] Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 234.

[12] Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 147.

was some difficulty in finding hands for this, as the men were averse to the employment. Cortés selected those who came from Palos, Moguer, and other maritime towns, and, notwithstanding their frequent claims of exemption, as hidalgos, from this menial occupation, he pressed them into the service.[13] Each vessel mounted a piece of heavy ordnance, and was placed under an officer of respectability, to whom Cortés gave a general code of instructions for the government of the little navy, of which he proposed to take the command in person.

He had already sent to his Indian confederates, announcing his purpose of immediately laying siege to Mexico, and called on them to furnish their promised levies, within the space of ten days at furthest. The Tlascalans he ordered to join him in Tezcuco; the others were to assemble at Chalco, a more convenient place of rendezvous for the operations in the southern quarter of the Valley. The Tlascalans arrived within the time prescribed, led by the younger Xicotencatl, supported by Chichemecatl, the same doughty warrior who had convoyed the brigantines to Tezcuco. They came fifty thousand strong, according to Cortés,[14] making a brilliant show with their military finery, and marching proudly forward under the great national banner, emblazoned with a spread eagle, the arms of the republic.[15] With as blithe and manly a step, as if they were going to the battle-ground, they defiled through the gates of the capital, making its walls ring with the friendly shouts of "Castile and Tlascala."

The observations, which Cortés had made in his late tour of *reconnaissance*, had determined him to begin the siege by dis-

[13] Ibid., ubi supra.

Hidalguía, besides its legal privileges, brought with it some fanciful ones to its possessor; if, indeed, it be considered a privilege to have excluded him from many a humble, but honest, calling, by which the poor man might have gained his bread. (For an amusing account of these, see Doblado's Letters from Spain, let. 2.) In no country has the *poor gentleman* afforded so rich a theme for the satirist, as the writings of Le Sage, Cervantes, and Lope de Vega abundantly show.

[14] "Y los Capitanes de Tascaltecal con toda su gente, muy lúcida, y bien armada, ... y segun la cuenta, que los Capitanes nos diéron, pasaban de cinquenta mil Hombres de Guerra." (Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 236.) "I toda la Gente," adds Herrera, "tardó tres Dias en entrar, segun en sus Memoriales dice Alonso de Ojeda, ni con ser Tezcuco tan gran Ciudad, cabian en ella." Hist. General, dec. 3, lib. 1, cap. 13.

[15] "Y sus vãderas tẽdidas, y el aue blãca q tienen por armas, q parece águila, con sus alas tendidas" (Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 149.) A spread eagle of gold, Clavigero considers as the arms of the republic. (Clavigero, Stor. del Messico, tom II. p. 145.) But, as Bernal Diaz speaks of it as "white," it may have been the white heron, which belonged to the house of Xicotencatl.

tributing his forces into three separate camps, which he proposed to establish at the extremities of the principal causeways. By this arrangement the troops would be enabled to move in concert on the capital, and be in the best position to intercept its supplies from the surrounding country. The first of these points was Tacuba, commanding the fatal causeway of the *noche triste*. This was assigned to Pedro de Alvarado, with a force consisting, according to Cortés' own statement, of thirty horse, one hundred and sixty-eight Spanish infantry, and five and twenty thousand Tlascalans. Christoval de Olid had command of the second army, of much the same magnitude, which was to take up its position at Cojohuacan, the city, it will be remembered, overlooking the short causeway connected with that of Iztapalapan. Gonzalo de Sandoval had charge of the third division, of equal strength with each of the two preceding, but which was to draw its Indian levies from the forces assembled at Chalco. This officer was to march on Iztapalapan, and, complete the destruction of that city, begun by Cortés soon after his entrance into the Valley. It was too formidable a post to remain in the rear of the army. The general intended to support the attack with his brigantines, after which the subsequent movements of Sandoval would be determined by circumstances.[16]

Having announced his intended dispositions to his officers, the Spanish commander called his troops together, and made one of those brief and stirring harangues, with which he was wont on great occasions to kindle the hearts of his soldiery. "I have taken the last step," he said; "I have brought you to the goal for which you have so long panted. A few days will place you before the gates of Mexico,—the capital from which you were driven with so much ignominy. But we now go forward under the smiles of Providence. Does any one doubt it? Let him but compare our present condition with that in which we found ourselves not twelve months since, when, broken and dispirited, we sought shelter within the walls of Tlascala; nay, with that in which we were but a few months since, when we took up our quarters in Tezcuco.[17] Since that time our strength

[16] The precise amount of each division, as given by Cortés, was,—in that of Alvarado, 30 horse, 168 Castilian infantry, and 25,000 Tlascalan; in that of Olid, 33 horse, 178 infantry, 20,000 Tlascalans; and in Sandoval's, 24 horse, 167 infantry, 30,000 Indians.—(Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, p. 236.) Diaz reduces the number of native troops to one third. Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 150.

[17] "Que se alegrassen, y esforzassen mucho, pues que veian, que nuestro Señor nos encaminaba para haber victoria de nuestros Enemigos: porque bien sabian, que quando habiamos entrado en Tesaico, no habiamos trahido

has been nearly doubled. We are fighting the battles of the Faith, fighting for our honor, for riches, for revenge. I have brought you face to face with your foe. It is for you to do the rest." [18]

The address of the bold chief was answered by the thundering acclamations of his followers, who declared that every man would do his duty under such a leader; and they only asked to be led against the enemy.[19] Cortés then caused the regulations for the army, published at Tlascala, to be read again to the troops, with the assurance that they should be enforced to the letter.

It was arranged, that the Indian forces should precede the Spanish by a day's march, and should halt for their confederates on the borders of the Tezcucan territory. A circumstance occurred soon after their departure, which gave bad augury for the future. A quarrel had risen in the camp at Tezcuco, between a Spanish soldier and a Tlascalan chief, in which the latter was badly hurt, He was sent back to Tlascala, and the matter was hushed up, that it might not reach the ears of the general, who, it was known, would not pass it over lightly. Xicotencatl was a near relative of the injured party, and, on the first day's halt, he took the opportunity to leave the army, with a number of his followers, and set off for Tlascala. Other causes are assigned for his desertion.[20] It is certain, that, from the first, he had looked on the expedition with an evil eye, and had predicted that no good would come of it. He came into it with reluctance, as, indeed, he detested the Spaniards in his heart.

His partner in the command instantly sent information of the affair to the Spanish general, still encamped at Tezcuco. Cortés, who saw at once the mischievous consequences of this defection

mas de quarenta de Caballo, y que Dios nos habia socorrido, mejor, que lo habiamos pensado." Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 235.

[18] Oviedo expands, what he nevertheless, calls the "brebe é substancial oracion" of Cortés, into treble the length of it, as found in the general's own pages: in which he is imitated by most of the other chroniclers. Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 22.

[19] "Y con estas últimas palabras cesó; y todas respondiéron sin discrepancia, é á una voce dicentes: Sirvanse Dios y el Emperador nuestro Señor de tan buen capitan, y de nostros, que así lo harémos todos como quien somos, y como se debe esperar de buenos Españoles, y con tanta voluntad, y deseo; dicho que parecia que cada hora les era perder vn año de tiempo por estar ya á las manos con los Enemigos." Oviedo Hist. de las Ind., MS., ubi supra.

[20] According to Diaz, the desire to possess himself of the lands of his comrade Chichemecatl, who remained with the army; (Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 150;) according to Herrera, it was an amour that carried him home. (Hist. General. dec. 3, lib. 1, cap. 17.) Both and all agree on the chief's aversion to the Spaniards, and to the war.

at such a time, detached a party of Tlascalan and Tezcucan Indians after the fugitive, with instructions to prevail on him, if possible, to return to his duty. They overtook him on the road, and remonstrated with him on his conduct, contrasting it with that of his countrymen generally, and of his own father in particular, the steady friend of the white men. "So much the worse," replied the chieftain; "if they had taken my counsel, they would never have become the dupes of the perfidious strangers."[21] Finding their remonstrances received only with anger or contemptuous taunts, the emissaries returned without accomplishing their object.

Cortés did not hesitate on the course he was to pursue. "Xicotencatl," he said, "had always been the enemy of the Spaniards, first in the field, and since in the council-chamber; openly, or in secret, still the same,—their implacable enemy. There was no use in parleying with the false-hearted Indian." He instantly despatched a small body of horse with an alguacil to arrest the chief, wherever he might be found, even though it were in the streets of Tlascala, and to bring him back to Tezcuco. At the same time, he sent information of Xicotencatl's proceedings to the Tlascalan senate, adding, that desertion among the Spaniards was punished with death.

The emissaries of Cortés punctually fulfilled his orders. They arrested the fugitive chief,—whether in Tlascala or in its neighborhood is uncertain,—and brought him a prisoner to Tezcuco, where a high gallows, erected in the great square, was prepared for his reception. He was instantly led to the place of execution; his sentence and the cause for which he suffered were publicly proclaimed, and the unfortunate cacique expiated his offence by the vile death of a malefactor His ample property, consisting of lands, slaves, and some gold, was all confiscated to the Castilian crown.[22]

[21] "Y la respuesta que le embió á dezir fué, que si el viejo de su padre, y Masse Escaci le huvieran creido, que no se huvieran señoreado tanto dellos, que les haze hazer todo lo que quiere: *y por no gastar mas palabras, dixo, que no queria venir.*" Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 150.

[22] So says Herrera, who had the Memorial of Ojeda in his possession, one of the Spaniards employed to apprehend the chieftain. (Hist. General, dec. 3. lib. 1, cap. 17, and Torquemada, Monarch. Ind., lib. 4, cap. 90) Bernal Diaz, on the other hand, says that the Tlascalan chief was taken and executed on the road. (Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 150.) But the latter chronicler was probably absent at the time with Alvarado's division, in which he served.—Solís, however, prefers his testimony, on the ground, that Cortés would not have hazarded the execution of Xicotencatl before the eyes of his own troops. (Conquista, lib. 5, cap. 19.) But the Tlascalans were already well on their way towards Tacuba. A very few only could have remained in Tezcuco, which was occupied by the citizens and the Castilian

Thus perished Xicotencatl, in the flower of his age,—as dauntless a warrior as ever led an Indian army to battle. He was the first chief who successfully resisted the arms of the invaders; and, had the natives of Anahuac, generally, been animated with a spirit like his, Cortés would probably never have set foot in the capital of Montezuma. He was gifted with a clearer insight into the future than his countrymen; for he saw that the European was an enemy far more to be dreaded than the Aztec. Yet, when he consented to fight under the banner of the white men, he had no right to desert it, and he incurred the penalty prescribed by the code of savage as well as of civilized nations. It is said, indeed, that the Tlascalan senate aided in apprehending him, having previously answered Cortés, that his crime was punishable with death by their own laws.[23] It was a bold act, however, thus to execute him in the midst of his people. For he was a powerful chief, heir to one of the four seigniories of the republic. His chivalrous qualities made him popular, especially with the younger part of his countrymen; and his garments were torn into shreds at his death, and distributed as sacred relics among them. Still, no resistance was offered to the execution of the sentence, and no commotion followed it. He was the only Tlascalan who ever swerved from his loyalty to the Spaniards.

According to the plan of operations settled by Cortés, Sandoval, with his division, was to take a southern direction, while Alvarado and Olid would make the northern circuit of the lakes. These two cavaliers, after getting possession of Tacuba, were to advance to Chapoltepec, and demolish the great aqueduct there, which supplied Mexico with water. On the 10th of May, they commenced their march; but at Acolman, where they halted for the night, a dispute arose between the soldiers of the two divisions, respecting their quarters. From words they came to blows, and a defiance was even exchanged between the leaders, who entered into the angry feelings of their followers.[24] Intelligence of this was soon communicated to Cortés, who sent at once to the fiery chiefs, imploring them, by their regard for him and the common cause, to lay aside their differences, which must end in their own ruin, and that of the expedition. His remonstrance

army,—neither of them very likely to interfere in the prisoner's behalf. His execution there would be an easier matter than in the territory of Tlascala which he had probably reached before his apprehension.

[23] Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 3, lib. 1, cap. 17.—Torquemada, Monarch. Ind., lib. 4, cap. 90.

[24] "Y sobre ello ya auiamos echado mano á las armas los de nuestra Capitanía contra los de Christóual de Oli, y aun los Capitanes desafiados." Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 150.

prevailed, at least, so far as to establish a show of reconciliation between the parties. But Olid was not a man to forget, or easily to forgive; and Alvarado, though frank and liberal, had an impatient temper much more easily excited than appeased. They were never afterwards friends.[25]

The Spaniards met with no opposition on their march. The principal towns were all abandoned by the inhabitants, who had gone to strengthen the garrison of Mexico, or taken refuge with their families among the mountains. Tacuba was in like manner deserted, and the troops once more established themselves in their old quarters in the lordly city of the Tepanecs.[26]

Their first undertaking was, to cut off the pipes that conducted the water from the royal streams of Chapoltepec to feed the numerous tanks and fountains which sparkled in the courtyards of the capital. The aqueduct, partly constructed of brick-work, and partly of stone and mortar, was raised on a strong, though narrow, dike, which transported it across an arm of the lake; and the whole work was one of the most pleasing monuments of Mexican civilization. The Indians, well aware of its importance, had stationed a large body of troops for its protection. A battle followed, in which both sides suffered considerably, but the Spaniards were victorious. A part of the aqueduct was demolished, and during the siege no water found its way again to the capital through this channel.

On the following day, the combined forces descended on the fatal causeway, to make themselves masters, if possible, of the nearest bridge. They found the dike covered with a swarm of warriors, as numerous as on the night of their disaster, while the surface of the lake was dark with the multitude of canoes. The intrepid Christians strove to advance under a perfect hurricane of missiles from the water and the land, but they made slow progress. Barricades thrown across the causeway embarrassed the cavalry, and rendered it nearly useless. The sides of the Indian boats were fortified with bulwarks, which shielded the crews from the arquebuses and crossbows; and, when the war-

[25] Ibid., loc. cit.—Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 237.—Gomara, Crónica, cap. 130.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 22.

[26] The Tepanec capital, shorn of its ancient splendors, is now only interesting from its historic associations. "These plains of Tacuba," says the spirited author of "Life in Mexico," "once the theatre of fierce and bloody conflicts, and where, during the siege of Mexico, Alvarado "of the leap" fixed his camp, now present a very tranquil scene. Tacuba itself is now a small village of mud huts, with some fine old trees, a few very old ruined houses, a ruined church, and some traces of a building, which ——— assured us had been the palace of their last monarch; whilst others declare it to have been the site of the Spanish encampment." Vol. I. let. 13.

riors on the dike were hard pushed by the pike-men they threw themselves fearlessly into the water, as if it were their native element, and, reappearing along the sides of the dike, shot off their arrows and javelins with fatal execution. After a long and obstinate struggle, the Christians were compelled to fall back on their own quarters with disgrace, and—including the allies—with nearly as much damage as they had inflicted on the enemy. Olid, disgusted with the result of the engagement, inveighed against his companion, as having involved them in it by his wanton temerity, and drew off his forces the next morning to his own station at Cojohuacan.

The camps, separated by only two leagues, maintained an easy communication with each other. They found abundant employment in foraging the neighboring country for provisions, and in repelling the active sallies of the enemy; on whom they took their revenge by cutting off his supplies. But their own position was precarious, and they looked with impatience for the arrival of the brigantines under Cortés. It was in the latter part of May, that Olid took up his quarters at Cojohuacan; and from that time may be dated the commencement of the siege of Mexico.[27]

[27] Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, pp. 237–239.—Ixtlilxochitl, Hist. Chich., MS., cap. 94.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 22.—Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 50.—Gomara, Crónica, cap. 130.

Clavigero settles this date at the day of Corpus Christi, May 30th. (Clavigero, Stor. del Messico, tom. III. p. 196.) But the Spaniards left Tezcuco, May 10th, according to Cortés; and three weeks could not have intervened between their departure, and their occupation of Cojohuacan. Clavigero disposes of this difficulty, it is true, by dating the beginning of their march on the 20th, instead of the 10th of May; following the chronology of Herrera, instead of that of Cortés. Surely, the general is the better authority of the two.

CHAPTER V.

INDIAN FLOTILLA DEFEATED.—OCCUPATION OF THE CAUSEWAYS.—DESPERATE ASSAULTS.—FIRING OF THE PALACES.—SPIRIT OF THE BESIEGED.—BARRACKS FOR THE TROOPS.

1521.

No sooner had Cortés received intelligence that his two officers had established themselves in their respective posts, than he ordered Sandoval to march on Iztapalapan. The cavalier's route led him through a country for the most part friendly; and at Chalco his little body of Spaniards was swelled by the formidable muster of Indian levies who awaited there his approach. After this junction, he continued his march without opposition till he arrived before the hostile city, under whose walls he found a large force drawn up to receive him. A battle followed, and the natives, after maintaining their ground sturdily for some time, were compelled to give way, and to seek refuge either on the water, or in that part of the town which hung over it. The remainder was speedily occupied by the Spaniards.

Meanwhile Cortés had set sail with his flotilla, intending to support his lieutenant's attack by water. On drawing near the southern shore of the lake, he passed under the shadow of an insulated peak, since named from him the "Rock of the Marquess." It was held by a body of Indians, who saluted the fleet, as it passed, with showers of stones and arrows. Cortés, resolving to punish their audacity, and to clear the lake of his troublesome enemy, instantly landed with a hundred and fifty of his followers. He placed himself at their head, scaled the steep ascent, in the face of a driving storm of missiles, and, reaching the summit, put the garrison to the sword. There was a number of women and children, also, gathered in the place, whom he spared.[1]

[1] "It was a beautiful victory," exclaims the Conqueror. "E entrámoslos de tal manera, que ninguno de ellos se escapó, excepto las Mugeres, y Niños; y en este combate me hiriéron veinte y cinco Españoles, pero fué muy hermosa Victoria." Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, p. 241

On the top of the eminence was a blazing beacon, serving to notify to the inhabitants of the capital when the Spanish fleet weighed anchor. Before Cortés had regained his brigantine, the canoes and *piraguas* of the enemy had left the harbors of Mexico, and were seen darkening the lake for many a rood. There were several hundred of them, all crowded with warriors, and advancing rapidly by means of their oars over the calm bosom of the waters.[2]

Cortés, who regarded his fleet, to use his own language, as "the key of the war," felt the importance of striking a decisive blow in the first encounter with the enemy.[3] It was with chagrin, therefore, that he found his sails rendered useless by the want of wind. He calmly waited the approach of the Indian squadron, which, however, lay on their oars at something more than musket-shot distance, as if hesitating to encounter these leviathans of their waters. At this moment, a light air from land rippled the surface of the lake; it gradually freshened into a breeze, and Cortés taking advantage of the friendly succor, which he may be excused, under all the circumstances, for regarding as especially sent him by Heaven, extended his line of battle, and bore down, under full press of canvas on the enemy.[4]

The latter no sooner encountered the bows of their formidable opponents, than they were overturned and sent to the bottom by the shock, or so much damaged that they speedily filled and sank. The water was covered with the wreck of broken canoes, and with the bodies of men struggling for life in the waves, and vainly imploring their companions to take them on board their over-crowded vessels. The Spanish fleet, as it dashed through the mob of boats, sent off its volleys to the right and left with a terrible effect, completing the discomfiture of the Aztecs. The latter made no attempt at resistance, scarcely venturing a single flight of arrows, but strove with all their strength to regain the port from which they had so lately issued. They were no match in the chase, any more than in the fight, for their terrible antagonist, who, borne on the wings of the wind, careered to and fro at his pleasure, dealing death widely around

[2] About five hundred boats, according to the general's own estimate; (Ibid., loc. cit.;) but more than four thousand, according to Bernal Diaz; (Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 150;) who, however, was not present.

[3] "Y como yo deseaba mucho, que el primer reencuentro, que con ellos obiessemos, fuesse de mucha victoria; y se hiciesse de manera, que ellos cobrassen mucho temor de los bergantines, porque la llave de toda la Guerra estaba en ellos." Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, pp. 241, 242.

[4] "Plugo á nuestro Señor, que estandonos mirando los unos à los otros, vino un viento de la Tierra muy favorable para embestir con ellos." Ibid., p. 242.

him, and making the shores ring with the thunders of his ordnance. A few only of the Indian flotilla succeeded in recovering the port, and, gliding up the canals, found a shelter in the bosom of the city, where the heavier burden of the brigantines made it impossible for them to follow. This victory, more complete than even the sanguine temper of Cortés had prognosticated, proved the superiority of the Spaniards, and left them, henceforth, undisputed masters of the Aztec sea.[5]

It was nearly dusk, when the squadron, coasting along the great southern causeway, anchored off the point of junction, called Xoloc, where the branch from Cojohuacan meets the principal dike. The avenue widened at this point, so as to afford room for two towers, or turreted temples, built of stone, and surrounded by walls of the same material, which presented altogether a position of some strength, and, at the present moment, was garrisoned by a body of Aztecs. They were not numerous, and Cortés, landing with his soldiers, succeeded without much difficulty in dislodging the enemy, and in getting possession of the works.

It seems to have been originally the general's design, to take up his own quarters with Olid at Cojohuacan. But, if so, he now changed his purpose, and wisely fixed on this spot, as the best position for his encampment. It was but half a league distant from the capital; and, while it commanded its great southern avenue, had a direct communication with the garrison at Cojohuacan, through which he might receive supplies from the surrounding country. Here, then, he determined to establish his headquarters. He at once caused his heavy iron cannon to be transferred from the brigantines to the causeway, and sent orders to Olid to join him with half his force, while Sandoval was instructed to abandon his present quarters, and advance to Cojohuacan, whence he was to detach fifty picked men of his infantry to the camp of Cortés. Having made these arrange-

[5] Ibid., loc. cit.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 48.—Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva España, MS., lib. 12, cap. 32.

I may be excused for again quoting a few verses from a beautiful description in "Madoc," and one as pertinent as it is beautiful.

> "Their thousand boats, and the ten thousand oars
> From whose broad bowls the waters fall and flash,
> And twice ten thousand feathered helms, and shields,
> Glittering with gold and scarlet plumery.
> Onward they come with song and swelling horn;
> . . . . . On the other side
> Advance the *British* barks; the freshening breeze
> Fills the broad sail; around the rushing keel
> The waters sing, while proudly they sail on.
> Lords of the water."
>
> MADOC, Part 2, canto 25.

ments, the general busily occupied himself with strengthening the works at Xoloc, and putting them in the best posture of defence.

During the first five or six days after their encampment, the Spaniards experienced much annoyance from the enemy, who too late endeavored to prevent their taking up a position so near the capital, and which, had they known much of the science of war, they would have taken better care themselves to secure. Contrary to their usual practice, the Indians made their attacks by night as well as by day. The water swarmed with canoes, which hovered at a distance, in terror of the brigantines, but still approached near enough, especially under cover of the darkness, to send showers of arrows into the Christian camp, that fell so thick as to hide the surface of the ground, and impede the movements of the soldiers. Others ran along the western side of the causeway, unprotected, as it was, by the Spanish fleet, and plied their archery with such galling effect, that the Spaniards were forced to make a temporary breach in the dike, wide enough to admit two of their own smaller vessels, which, passing through, soon obtained as entire command of the interior basin, as they before had of the outer. Still, the bold barbarians, advancing along the causeway, marched up within bow-shot of the Christian ramparts, sending forth such yells and discordant battle-cries, that it seemed, in the words of Cortés, "as if heaven and earth were coming together." But they were severely punished for their temerity, as the batteries, which commanded the approaches to the camp, opened a desolating fire, that scattered the assailants, and drove them back in confusion to their own quarters.[6]

The two principal avenues to Mexico, those on the south and the west, were now occupied by the Christians. There still remained a third, the great dike of Tepejacac, on the north, which, indeed, taking up the principal street, that passed in a direct line through the heart of the city, might be regarded as a continuation of the dike of Iztapalapan. By this northern route a means of escape was still left open to the besieged, and they availed themselves of it, at present, to maintain their communications with the country, and to supply themselves with provisions. Alvarado, who observed this from his station at Tacuba, advised his commander of it, and the latter instructed Sandoval

[6] "Y era tanta la multitud," says Cortés, "que por el Agua, y por la Tierra no viamos sino Gente, y daban tantas gritas, y alaridos, que parecia que se hundia el Mundo." Ibid., p. 245.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 23.—Ixtlilxochitl, Hist. Chich., MS., cap. 95.—Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva España, MS., lib. 12, cap. 32.

to take up his position on the causeway. That officer, though suffering, at the time, from a severe wound, received from a lance in one of the late skirmishes, hastened to obey; and thus, by shutting up its only communication with the surrounding country, completed the blockade of the capital.[7]

But Cortés was not content to wait patiently the effects of a dilatory blockade, which might exhaust the patience of his allies, and his own resources. He determined to support it by such active assaults on the city, as should still further distress the besieged, and hasten the hour of surrender. For this purpose, he ordered a simultaneous attack, by the two commanders at the other stations, on the quarters nearest their encampments.

On the day appointed, his forces were under arms with the dawn. Mass, as usual, was performed; and the Indian confederates, as they listened with grave attention to the stately and imposing service, regarded with undisguised admiration the devotional reverence shown by the Christians, whom, in their simplicity, they looked upon as little less than divinities themselves.[8] The Spanish infantry marched in the van, led on by Cortés, attended by a number of cavaliers, dismounted like himself. They had not moved far upon the causeway, when they were brought to a stand by one of the open breaches, that had formerly been traversed by a bridge. On the further side a solid rampart of stone and lime had been erected, and behind this a strong body of Aztecs were posted, who discharged on the Spaniards, as they advanced, a thick volley of arrows. The latter vainly endeavored to dislodge them with their fire-arms and cross-bows; they were too well secured behind their defences.

Cortés then ordered two of the brigantines, which had kept along, one on each side of the causeway, in order to coöperate with the army, to station themselves so as to enfilade the position occupied by the enemy, Thus placed between two well directed fires, the Indians were compelled to recede. The soldiers on board the vessels, springing to land, bounded like deer up the sides of the dike. They were soon followed by their countrymen, under Cortés, who, throwing themselves into the

[7] Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, pp. 246, 247.—Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 150.—Herrera, Hist. de las Ind., dec. 3, lib. 1, cap. 17.—Defensa, MS., cap. 28.

[8] "Así como fué de dia se dixo vna misa de Espíritu Santo, que todos los Christianos oyéron con mucha devocion; é aun los Indios, co[illegible] simples, é no entendientes de tan alto misterio, con admiracion estaban atentos notando el silencio de los cathólicos y el acatamiento que al altar, y al sacerdote los Christianos toviéron hasta recevir la benedicion. Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 24.

water, swam the undefended chasm, and joined in pursuit of the enemy. The Mexicans fell back, however, in something like order, till they reached another opening in the dike, like the former, dismantled of its bridge, and fortified in the same manner by a bulwark of stone, behind which the retreating Aztecs, swimming across the chasm, and reinforced by fresh bodies of their countrymen, again took shelter.

They made good their post, till, again assailed by the cannonade from the brigantines, they were compelled to give way. In this manner breach after breach was carried, and, at every fresh instance of success, a shout went up from the crews of the vessels, which, answered by the long files of the Spaniards and their confederates on the causeway, made the Valley echo to its borders.

Cortés had now reached the end of the great avenue, where it entered the suburbs. There he halted to give time for the rear-guard to come up with him. It was detained by the labor of filling up the breaches, in such a manner as to make a practicable passage for the artillery and horse, and to secure one for the rest of the army on its retreat. This important duty was intrusted to the allies, who executed it by tearing down the ramparts on the margins, and throwing them into the chasms, and when this was not sufficient,—for the water was deep around the southern causeway,—by dislodging the great stones and rubbish from the dike itself, which was broad enough to admit of it, and adding them to the pile, until it was raised above the level of the water.

The street, on which the Spaniards now entered, was the great avenue that intersected the town from north to south, and the same by which they had first visited the capital. It was broad and perfectly straight, and, in the distance, dark masses of warriors might be seen gathering to the support of their countrymen, who were prepared to dispute the further progress of the Spaniards. The sides were lined with buildings, the terraced roofs of which were also crowded with combatants, who, as the army advanced, poured down a pitiless storm of missiles on their heads, which glanced harmless, indeed, from the coat of mail, but too often found their way through the more common *escaupil* of the soldier, already gaping with many a ghastly rent. Cortés, to rid himself of this annoyance for the future, ordered his Indian pioneers to level the principal buildings as they advanced; in which work of demolition, no less than in the repair of the breaches, they proved of inestimable service.[9]

[9] Sahagan, Hist. de Nueva España, MS., lib. 12, cap. 32.—Ixtlilxochitl, Hist. Chich., MS., cap. 95.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 23.—Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, pp. 247, 248.

The Spaniards, meanwhile, were steadily, but slowly advancing, as the enemy recoiled before the rolling fire of musketry, though turning, at intervals, to discharge their javelins and arrows against their pursuers. In this way they kept along the great street, until their course was interrupted by a wide ditch or canal, once traversed by a bridge, of which only a few planks now remained. These were broken by the Indians, the moment they had crossed, and a formidable array of spears was instantly seen bristling over the summit of a solid rampart of stone, which protected the opposite side of the canal. Cortés was no longer supported by his brigantines, which the shallowness of the canals prevented from penetrating into the suburbs. He brought forward his arquebusiers, who, protected by the targets of their comrades, opened a fire on the enemy. But the balls fell harmless from the bulwarks of stone: while the assailants presented but too easy a mark to their opponents.

The general then caused the heavy guns to be brought up, and opened a lively cannonade, which soon cleared a breach in the works, through which the musketeers and crossbow-men poured in their volleys thick as hail. The Indians now gave way in disorder, after having held their antagonists at bay for two hours.[10] The latter, jumping into the shallow water, scaled the opposite bank without further resistance, and drove the enemy along the street towards the square, where the sacred pyramid reared its colossal bulk high over the other edifices of the city.

It was a spot too familiar to the Spaniards. On one side stood the palace of Axayacatl, their old quarters, the scene to many of them of so much suffering. Opposite was the pile of low, irregular buildings, once the residence of the unfortunate Montezuma; while a third side of the square was flanked by

[10] Ibid., ubi supra.—Ixtlilxochitl. Hist. Chich., MS., cap. 95.

Here terminates the work last cited of the Tezcucan chronicler; who has accompanied us from the earliest period of our narrative down to this point in the final siege of the capital. Whether the concluding pages of the manuscript have been lost, or whether he was interrupted by death, it is impossible to say. But the deficiency is supplied by a brief sketch of the principal events of the siege, which he has left in another of his writings. He had, undoubtedly, uncommon sources of information in his knowledge of the Indian languages and picture-writing, and in the oral testimony which he was at pains to collect from the actors in the scenes he describes. All these advantages are too often counterbalanced by a singular incapacity for discriminating—I will not say, between historic truth and falsehood (for what is truth?)—but between the probable, or rather the possible, and the impossible. One of the generation of primitive converts to the Romish faith, he lived in a state of twilight civilization, when, if miracles were not easily wrought, it was at least easy to believe them.

the *Coatepantli*, or Wall of Serpents, which encompassed the great *teocalli* with its little city of holy edifices. The Spaniards halted at the entrance of the square, as if oppressed, and for the moment overpowered, by the bitter recollections that crowded on their minds. But their intrepid leader, impatient at their hesitation, loudly called on them to advance before the Aztecs had time to rally; and, grasping his target in one hand, and waving his sword high above his head with the other, he cried his war-cry of "St. Iago," and led them at once against the enemy.[11]

The Mexicans, intimidated by the presence of their detested foe, who, in spite of all their efforts, had again forced his way into the heart of their city, made no further resistance, but retreated, or rather fled, for refuge into the sacred inclosure of the *teocalli*, where the numerous buildings scattered over its ample area afforded many good points of defence. A few priests, clad in their usual wild and bloodstained vestments, were to be seen lingering on the terraces which wound round the stately sides of the pyramid, chanting hymns in honor of their god, and encouraging the warriors below to battle bravely for their altars.[12]

The Spaniards poured through the open gates into the area, and a small party rushed up the winding corridors to its summit. No vestige now remained there of the Cross, or of any other symbol of the pure faith to which it had been dedicated. A new effigy of the Aztec war-god had taken the place of the one demolished by the Christians, and raised its fantastic and hideous form in the same niche which had been occupied by its predecessor. The Spaniards soon tore away its golden mask and the rich jewels with which it was bedizened, and, hurling the struggling priests down the sides of the pyramid, made the best of their way to their comrades in the area. It was full time.[13]

[11] "I con todo eso no se determinaban los Christianos de entrar en la Plaça; por lo qual diciendo Hernando Cortés, que no era tiempo de mostrar cansancio, ni cobardía, con vna Rodela en la mano, apellidando Santiago, arremetió el primero." Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 3, lib. 1. cap. 18.

[12] Sahagun. Hist. de Nuevá España, MS., lib. 12, cap. 32.

[13] Ixtlilxochitl, in his Thirteenth Relation, embracing among other things a brief notice of the capture of Mexico, of which an edition has been given to the world by the industrious Bustamante, bestows the credit of this exploit on Cortés himself. "En la capilla mayor donde estaba Huitzilopoxctli, que llegáron Cortés é Ixtlilxuchitl á un tiempo, y ambos embistiéron con el ídolo. *Cortés cogió la máscara de oro que tenia puesta este ídolo* con ciertas piedras preciosas que estaban engastadas en ella." Venida de los Esp., p. 29.

The Aztecs, indignant at the sacrilegious outrage perpetrated before their eyes, and gathering courage from the inspiration of the place, under the very presence of their deities, raised a yell of horror and vindictive fury, as, throwing themselves into something like order, they sprang, by a common impulse, on the Spaniards. The latter, who had halted near the entrance, though taken by surprise, made an effort to maintain their position at the gateway. But in vain; for the headlong rush of the assailants drove them at once into the square, where they were attacked by other bodies of Indians, pouring in from the neighboring streets. Broken, and losing their presence of mind, the troops made no attempt to rally, but, crossing the square, and abandoning the cannon, planted there, to the enemy, they hurried down the great street of Iztapalapan. Here they were soon mingled with the allies, who choked up the way, and who, catching the panic of the Spaniards, increased the confusion, while the eyes of the fugitives, blinded by the missiles that rained on them from the *azoteas*, were scarcely capable of distinguishing friend from foe. In vain Cortés endeavored to stay the torrent, and to restore order. His voice was drowned in the wild uproar, as he was swept away, like drift-wood, by the fury of the current.

All seemed to be lost;—when suddenly sounds were heard in an adjoining street, like the distant tramp of horses galloping rapidly over the pavement. They drew nearer and nearer, and a body of cavalry soon emerged on the great square. Though but a handful in number, they plunged boldly into the thick of the enemy. We have often had occasion to notice the superstitious dread entertained by the Indians of the horse and his rider. And, although the long residence of the cavalry in the capital had familiarized the natives, in some measure, with their presence, so long a time had now elapsed since they had beheld them, that all their former mysterious terrors revived in full force; and when thus suddenly assailed in flank by the formidable apparition, they were seized with a panic, and fell into confusion. It soon spread to the leading files, and Cortés, perceiving his advantage, turned with the rapidity of lightning, and, at this time supported by his followers, succeeded in driving the enemy with some loss back into the inclosure.

It was now the hour of vespers, and, as night must soon overtake them, he made no further attempt to pursue his advantage. Ordering the trumpets, therefore, to sound a retreat, he drew off his forces in good order, taking with him the artillery, which had been abandoned in the square. The allies first went off the ground, followed by the Spanish infantry, while the rear was

protected by the horse, thus reversing the order of march on their entrance. The Aztecs hung on the closing files, and, though driven back by frequent charges of the cavalry, still followed in the distance, shooting off their ineffectual missiles, and filling the air with wild cries and howlings, like a herd of ravenous wolves disappointed of their prey. It was late before the army reached its quarters at Xoloc.[14]

Cortés had been well supported by Alvarado and Sandoval in this assault on the city; though neither of these commanders had penetrated the suburbs, deterred, perhaps, by the difficulties of the passage, which, in Alvarado's case, were greater than those presented to Cortés, from the greater number of breaches with which the dike in his quarter was intersected. Something was owing, too, to the want of brigantines, until Cortés supplied the deficiency by detaching half of his little navy to the support of his officers. Without their coöperation, however, the general himself could not have advanced so far, nor, perhaps, have succeeded at all in setting foot within the city. The success of this assault spread consternation not only among the Mexicans, but their vassals, as they saw that the formidable preparations for defence were to avail little against the white man, who had so soon, in spite of them, forced his way into the very heart of the capital. Several of the neighboring places, in consequence, now showed a willingness to shake off their allegiance, and claimed the protection of the Spaniards. Among these, were the territory of Xochimilco, so roughly treated by the invaders, and some tribes of Otomies, a rude but valiant people, who dwelt on the western confines of the Valley.[15] Their support was valuable, not so much from the additional reinforcements which it brought, as from the greater security it gave to the army, whose outposts were perpetually menaced by these warlike barbarians.

The most important aid, which the Spaniards received at this time, was from Tezcuco, whose prince, Ixtlilxochitl, gathered the whole strength of his levies, to the number of fifty thousand, if we are to credit Cortés, and led them in person to the Christian

[14] "Los de Caballo revolvian sobre ellos, que siempre alanceaban, ó mataban algunos; é como la Calle era muy larga, hubo lugar de hacerce esto quatro, ó cinco veces. E aunque los Enemigos vian que recibian daño, venian los Perros tan rabiosos, que en ninguna manera los podiamos detener, ni que nos dejassen de seguir." Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 250.—Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 3, lib. 1, cap. 18.—Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva España,,MS., lib. 12, cap. 32.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 23.

[15] The great mass of the Otomies were an untamed race, who roamed over the broad tracks of the plateau, far away to the north. But many of them, who found their way into the Valley, became blended with the Tezcucan and even with Tlascalan nation, making some of the best soldiers in their armies.

camp. By the general's orders, they were distributed among the three divisions of the besiegers.[16]

Thus strengthened, Cortés prepared to make another attack upon the capital, and that before it should have time to recover from the former. Orders were given to his lieutenants on the other causeways, to march at the same time, and coöperate with him, as before, in the assault. It was conducted in precisely the same manner as on the previous entry, the infantry taking the van, and the allies and cavalry following. But, to the great dismay of the Spaniards, they found two thirds of the breaches restored to their former state, and the stones and other materials, with which they had been stopped, removed by the indefatigable enemy. They were again obliged to bring up the cannon, the brigantines ran alongside, and the enemy was dislodged, and driven from post to post, in the same manner as on the preceding attack. In short, the whole work was to be done over again. It was not till an hour after noon, that the army had won a footing in the suburbs.

Here their progress was not so difficult as before; for the buildings, from the terraces of which they had experienced the most annoyance, had been swept away. Still it was only step by step that they forced a passage in face of the Mexican militia, who disputed their advance with the same spirit as before. Cortés, who would willingly have spared the inhabitants, if he could have brought them to terms, saw them with regret, as he says, thus desperately bent on a war of extermination. He conceived that there would be no way more likely to affect their minds, than by destroying at once some of the principal edifices, which they were accustomed to venerate as the pride and ornament of the city.[17]

[16] "Istrisuchil, [Ixtlilxochitl,] que es de edad de veinte y tres, ó veinte y quatro años, muy esforzado, amado, y temido de todos." (Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 251.) The greatest obscurity prevails among historians in respect to this prince, whom they seem to have confounded very often with his brother and predecessor on the throne of Tezcuco. It is rare, that either of them is mentioned by any other than his baptismal name of Hernando; and, if Herrera is correct in the assertion, that this name was assumed by both, it may explain in some degree the confusion. (Hist. General, dec. 3 lib. 1, cap. 18.) I have conformed in the main to the old Tezcucan chronicler, who gathered his account of his kinsman, as he tells us, from the records of his nation, and from the oral testimony of the contemporaries of the prince himself. Venida de los Esp., pp. 30, 31.

[17] "Daban ocasion, y nos forzaban á que totalmente les destruyessemos. E de esta postrera tenia mas sentimiento, y me pesaba en el alma, y pensaba que forma ternia para los atemorizar, de manera, que viniessen en conocimiento de su yerro, y de el daño, que podian recibir de nosotros, y no hacia sino quemalles, y derrocalles las Torres de sus Idolos, y sus Casas." Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 254.

Marching into the great square, he selected, as the first to be destroyed, the old palace of Axayacatl, his former barracks. The ample range of low buildings was, it is true, constructed of stone; but the interior, as well as the outworks, its turrets, and roofs, were of wood. The Spaniards, whose associations with the pile were of so gloomy a character, sprang to the work of destruction with a satisfaction, like that which the French mob may have felt in the demolition of the Bastile. Torches and firebrands were thrown about in all directions; the lower parts of the building were speedily on fire, which, running along the inflammable hangings and wood-work of the interior, rapidly spread to the second floor. There the element took freer range, and, before it was visible from without, sent up from every aperture and crevice a dense column of vapor, that hung like a funereal pall over the city. This was dissipated by a bright sheet of flame, which enveloped all the upper regions of the vast pile, till, the supporters giving way, the wide range of turreted chambers fell, amidst clouds of dust and ashes, with an appalling crash, that for a moment stayed the Spaniards in the work of devastation.

It was but for a moment. On the other side of the square, adjoining Montezuma's residence, were several buildings, as the reader is aware, appropriated to animals. One of these was now marked for destruction,—the House of Birds, filled with specimens of all the painted varieties which swarmed over the wide forests of Mexico. It was an airy and elegant building, after the Indian fashion, and, viewed in connection with its object, was undoubtedly a remarkable proof of refinement and intellectual taste in a barbarous monarch. Its light, combustible materials of wood and bamboo formed a striking contrast to the heavy stone edifices around it, and made it obviously convenient for the present purpose of the invaders. The torches were applied, and the fanciful structure was soon wrapped in flames, that sent their baleful splendors, far and wide, over city and lake. Its feathered inhabitants either perished in the fire, or those of stronger wing, bursting the burning lattice-work of the aviary, soared high into the air, and fluttering for a while over the devoted city, fled with loud screams to their native forests beyond the mountains.

The Aztecs gazed with inexpressible horror on this destruction of the venerable abode of their monarchs, and of the monuments of their luxury and splendor. Their rage was exasperated almost to madness, as they beheld their hated foes, the Tlascalans, busy in the work of desolation, and aided by the Tezcucans, their own allies, and not unfrequently their kinsmen. They vented their fury in bitter execrations, especially on the

young prince Ixtlilxochitl, who, marching side by side with Cortés, took his full share in the dangers of the day. The warriors from the housetops poured the most opprobrious epithets on him, as he passed, denouncing him as a false-hearted traitor; false to his country and his blood,—reproaches not altogether unmerited, as his kinsman, who chronicles the circumstance, candidly confesses.[18] He gave little heed to their taunts, however, holding on his way with the dogged resolution of one true to the cause in which he was embarked; and, when he entered the great square, he grappled with the leader of the Aztec forces, wrenched a lance from his grasp, won by the latter from the Christians, and dealt him a blow with his mace, or *maquahuitl*, which brought him lifeless to the ground.[19]

The Spanish commander, having accomplished the work of destruction, sounded a retreat, sending on the Indian allies, who blocked up the way before him. The Mexicans, maddened by their losses, in wild transports of fury hung close on his rear, and, though driven back by the cavalry, still returned, throwing themselves desperately under the horses, striving to tear the riders from their saddles, and content to throw away their own lives for one blow at their enemy. Fortunately the greater part of their militia was engaged with the assailants on the opposite quarters of the city, but, thus crippled, they pushed the Spaniards under Cortés so vigorously, that few reached the camp that night without bearing on their bodies some token of the desperate conflict.[20]

On the following day, and, indeed, on several days following, the general repeated his assaults with as little care for repose, as if he and his men had been made of iron. On one occasion he advanced some way down the street of Tacuba, in which he carried three of the bridges, desirous, if possible, to open a communication with Alvarado, posted on the contiguous causeway. But the Spaniards in that quarter had not penetrated beyond the suburbs, still impeded by the severe character of the ground, and wanting, it may be, somewhat of that fiery impetuosity, which the soldier feels, who fights under the eye of his chief.

[18] "Y desde las azoteas deshonrarle llamándole de traidor contra su patria y deudos, y otras razones pesadas, que á la verdad *á ellos les sobraba la razon;* mas Ixtlilxuchitl callaba y peleaba, que mas estimaba la amistad y salud de los Cristianos, que todo esto." Venida de los Esp., p. 32.

[19] Ibid., p. 29.

[20] For the preceding pages relating to this second assault, see Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, pp. 254–256,—Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva Esp., MS., lib. 12, cap. 33.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33. cap. 24,—Defensa, MS., cap. 25.

In each of these assaults, the breaches were found more or less restored to their original state by the pertinacious Mexicans, and the materials, which had been deposited in them with so much labor, again removed. It may seem strange, that Cortés did not take measures to guard against the repetition of an act which caused so much delay and embarrassment to his operations. He notices this in his Letter to the Emperor, in which he says, that to do so would have required, either that he should have established his quarters in the city itself, which would have surrounded him with enemies, and cut off his communications with the country; or that he should have posted a sufficient guard of Spaniards—for the natives were out of the question—to protect the breaches by night, a duty altogether beyond the strength of men engaged in so arduous service through the day.[21]

Yet this was the course adopted by Alvarado; who stationed, at night, a guard of forty soldiers for the defence of the opening nearest to the enemy. This was relieved by a similar detachment, in a few hours, and this again by a third, the two former still lying on their post; so that, on an alarm, a body of one hundred and twenty soldiers was ready on the spot to repel an attack. Sometimes, indeed, the whole division took up their bivouac in the neighborhood of the breach, resting on their arms, and ready for instant action.[22]

But a life of such incessant toil and vigilance was almost too severe even for the stubborn constitutions of the Spaniards. "Through the long night," exclaims Diaz, who served in Alvarado's division, "we kept out dreary watch; neither wind, nor wet, nor cold availing anything. There we stood, smarting, as we were, from the wounds we had received in the fight of the preceding day."[23] It was the rainy season, which continues in that country from July to September; and the surface of the causeways, flooded by the storms, and broken up by the constant movement of such large bodies of men, was converted

[21] Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, p. 259.

[22] Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 151.

According to Herrera, Alvarado and Sandoval did not conceal their disapprobation of the course pursued by their commander in respect to the breaches. "I Alvarado, i Sandoval, por su parte, tambien lo hiciéron mui bien, culpando á Hernando Cortés por estas retiradas, queriendo muchos que se quedara en lo ganado, por no bolver tantas veces á ello." Hist. General, dec. 3, lib. 1, cap. 19.

[23] "Porque como era de noche, no aguardauan mucho, y desta manera que he dicho velauamos, que ni porque llouiesse, ni vientos, ni frios, y aunque estauamos metidos en medio de grandes lodos, y heridos, allí auiamos de estar." Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 151.

into a marsh, or rather quagmire, which added inconceivably to the distresses of the army.

The troops under Cortés were scarcely in a better situation. But few of them could find shelter in the rude towers that garnished the works of Xoloc. The greater part were compelled to bivouac in the open air, exposed to all the inclemency of the weather. Every man, unless his wounds prevented it, was required by the camp regulations to sleep on his arms; and they were often roused from their hasty slumbers by the midnight call to battle. For Guatemozin, contrary to the usual practice of his countrymen, frequently selected the hours of darkness to aim a blow at the enemy. "In short," exclaims the veteran soldier above quoted, "so unintermitting were our engagements, by day and by night, during the three months in which we lay before the capital, that to recount them all would but exhaust the reader's patience, and make him to fancy he was perusing the incredible feats of a knight-errant of romance."[24]

The Aztec emperor conducted his operations on a systematic plan, which showed some approach to military science. He not unfrequently made simultaneous attacks on the three several divisons of the Spaniards established on the causeways, and on the garrisons at their extremities. To accomplish this, he enforced the service not merely of his own militia of the capital, but of the great towns in the neighborhood, who all moved in concert, at the well-known signal of the beacon-fire, or of the huge drum struck by the priests on the summit of the temple. One of these general attacks, it was observed, whether from accident or design, took place on the eve of St. John the Baptist, the anniversary of the day on which the Spaniards made their second entry into the Mexican capital.[25]

Notwithstanding the severe drain on his forces by this incessant warfare, the young monarch contrived to relieve them in some degree by different detachments, who took the place of one another. This was apparent from the different uniforms and military badges of the Indian battalions, who successively came and disappeared from the field. At night a strict guard was maintained in the Aztec quarters, a thing not common with the nations of the plateau. The outposts of the hostile armies

[24] "Porque nouenta y tres dias estuuímos sobre esta tan fuerre ciudad, cada dia é de noche teniamos guerras, y combates; é no lo pongo aquí por capítulos lo que cada dia haziamos, porque me parece que seria gran prolijidad, é seria cosa para nunca acabar, y pareceria á los libros de Amadis, é de otros corros de caualleros." Ibid., ubi supra.

[25] Ibid., ubi supra.—Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva Esp., MS., lib. 12, cap. 33.

were stationed within sight of each other. That of the Mexicans was usually placed in the neighborhood of some wide breach, and its position was marked by a large fire in front. The hours for relieving guard were intimated by the shrill Aztec whistle, while bodies of men might be seen moving behind the flame, which threw a still ruddier glow over the cinnamon-colored skins of the warriors.

While thus active on land, Guatemozin was not idle on the water. He was too wise, indeed, to cope with the Spanish navy again in open battle; but he resorted to stratagem, so much more congenial to Indian warfare. He placed a large number of canoes in ambuscade among the tall reeds which fringed the southern shores of the lake, and caused piles, at the same time to be driven into the neighboring shallows. Several *piraguas*, or boats of a larger size, then issued forth, and rowed near the spot where the Spanish brigantines were moored. Two of the smallest vessels, supposing the Indian barks were conveying provisions to the besieged, instantly stood after them, as had been foreseen. The Aztec boats fled for shelter to the reedy thicket, where their companions lay in ambush. The Spaniards, following, were soon entangled among the palisades under the water. They were instantly surrounded by the whole swarm of Indian canoes, most of the men were wounded, several, including the two commanders, slain, and one of the brigantines fell —a useless prize—into the hands of the victors. Among the slain was Pedro Barba, captain of the crossbow-men, a gallant officer, who had highly distinguished himself in the Conquest. This disaster occasioned much mortification to Cortés. It was a salutary lesson, that stood him in good stead during the remainder of the war.[26]

Thus the contest was waged by land and by water,—on the causeway, the city, and the lake. Whatever else might fail, the capital of the Aztec empire was true to itself: and, mindful of its ancient renown, opposed a bold front to its enemies in every direction. As in a body, whose extremities have been struck with death, life still rallied in the heart, and seemed to beat there, for the time, with even a more vigorous pulsation than ever.

It may appear extraordinary, that Guatemozin should have been able to provide for the maintenance of the crowded population now gathered in the metropolis, especially as the avenues were all in the possession of the besieging army.[27] But, indepen

[26] Ibid., loc. cit.—Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva Esp., MS., lib. 12, cap. 34.
[27] I recollect meeting with no estimate of their numbers; nor, in the loose

dently of the preparations made with this view before the siege, and of the loathsome sustenance daily furnished by the victims for sacrifice, supplies were constantly obtained from the surrounding country across the lake. This was so conducted, for a time, as, in a great measure, to escape observation; and even when the brigantines were commanded to cruise day and night, and sweep the waters of the boats employed in this service, many still contrived, under cover of the darkness, to elude the vigilance of the cruisers, and brought their cargoes into port. It was not till the great towns in the neighborhood cast off their allegiance, that the supply began to fail, from the failure of its sources. This defection was more frequent, as the inhabitants became convinced that the government, incompetent to its own defence, must be still more so to theirs; and the Aztec metropolis saw its great vassals fall off, one after another, as the tree, over which decay is stealing, parts with its leaves at the first blast of the tempest.[28]

The cities, which now claimed the Spanish general's protection, supplied the camp with an incredible number of warriors; a number, which, if we admit Cortés' own estimate, one hundred and fifty thousand,[29] could have only served to embarrass his operations on the long extended causeways. Yet it is true, that the Valley, teeming with towns and villages, swarmed with a population—and one, too, in which every man was a warrior—greatly exceeding that of the present day. These levies were distributed among the three garrisons at the terminations of the causeways; and many found active employment in foraging the country for provisions, and yet more in carrying on hostilities against the places still unfriendly to the Spaniards.

Cortés found further occupation for them in the construction of barracks for his troops, who suffered greatly from exposure to the incessant rains of the season, which were observed to fall more heavily by night than by day. Quantities of stone and timber were obtained from the buildings that had been demolished in the city. They were transported in the brigantines to the causeway, and from these materials a row of huts or barracks was constructed, extending on either side of the works of

arithmetic of the Conquerors, would it be worth much. They must, however, have been very great, to enable them to meet the assailants so promptly and efficiently on every point.

[28] Defensa, MS., cap. 28.—Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva Esp., MS., lib. 12, cap. 34.

The principal cities were Mexicaltzinco, Cuitlahuac, Iztapalapan, Mizquiz, Huitzilopochco, Colhuacan.

[29] "Y como aquel dia llevabamos mas de ciento y cincuenta mil Hombres de Guerra." Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, p. 280.

Xoloc It may give some idea of the great breadth of the causeway at this place, one of the deepest parts of the lake, to add, that, although the barracks were erected in parallel lines on the opposite sides of it, there still remained space enough for the army to defile between.[30]

By this arrangement, ample accommodations were furnished for the Spanish troops and their Indian attendants, amounting in all to about two thousand. The great body of the allies, with a small detachment of horse and infantry, were quartered at the neighboring post of Cojohuacan, which served to protect the rear of the encampment, and to maintain its communications with the country. A similar disposition of forces took place in the other divisions of the army, under Alvarado and Sandoval, though the accommodations provided for the shelter of the troops on their causeways were not so substantial as those for the division of Cortés.

The Spanish camp was supplied with provisions from the friendly towns in the neighborhood, and especially from Tezcuco.[31] They consisted of fish, the fruits of the country, particularly a sort of fig borne by the *tuna*, (*cactus opuntia*,) and a species of cherry, or something much resembling it, which grew abundant at this season. But their principal food was the *tortillas*, cakes of Indian meal, still common in Mexico, for which bakehouses were established, under the care of the natives, in the garrison towns commanding the causeways.[32] The allies, as appears too probable, reinforced their frugal fare with an occasional banquet on human flesh, for which the battle-field unhappily afforded them too much facility, and which, however

[30] "Y vea Vuestra Magestad," says Cortés to the Emperor, "que tan ancha puede ser la Calzada, que va por lo mas hondo de la Laguna, que de la una parte, y de la otra iban estas Casas, y quedaba en medio hecha Calle, que muy á placer á pie, y á caballo ibamos, y veniamos por ella." Ibid., p. 260.

[31] The greatest difficulty, under which the troops labored, according to Diaz, was that of obtaining the requisite medicaments for their wounds. But this was in a great degree obviated by a Catalan soldier, who, by virtue of his prayers and incantations, wrought wonderful cures both on the Spaniards, and their allies. The latter, as the more ignorant, flocked in crowds to the tent of this military Æsculapius, whose success was doubtless in a direct ratio to the faith of his patients. Hist. de la Conquista, ubi supra.

[32] Diaz mourns over this unsavory diet. (Ibid., loc. cit.) Yet the Indian fig is an agreeable, nutritious fruit; and the *tortilla*, made of maize flour, with a slight infusion of lime, though not precisely a *morceau friand*, might pass for very tolerable camp fare. According to the lively Author of "Life in Mexico," it is made now, precisely as it was in the days of the Aztecs.—If so, a cooking receipt is almost the only thing that has not changed in this country of revolutions.

shocking to the feelings of Cortés, he did not consider himself in a situation, at that moment, to prevent.[33]

Thus the tempest, which had been so long mustering, broke, at length, in all its fury, on the Aztec capital. Its unhappy inmates beheld the hostile legions encompassing them about, with their glittering files stretching as far as the eye could reach. They saw themselves deserted by their allies and vassals in their utmost need; the fierce stranger penetrating into their secret places, violating their temples, plundering their palaces, wasting the fair city by day, firing its suburbs by night, and intrenching himself in solid edifices under their walls, as if determined never to withdraw his foot while one stone remained upon another. All this they saw, yet their spirits were unbroken; and, though famine and pestilence were beginning to creep over them, they still showed the same determined front to their enemies. Cortés, who would gladly have spared the town and its inhabitants, beheld this resolution with astonishment. He intimated more than once, by means of the prisoners whom he released, his willingness to grant them fair terms of capitulation. Day after day, he fully expected his proffers would be accepted. But day after day he was disappointed.[34] He had yet to learn how tenacious was the memory of the Aztecs; and that, whatever might be the horrors of their present situation, and their fears for the future, they were all forgotten in their hatred of the white man.

[33] "Quo strages," says Martyr, "erat crudelior, eo magis copiose ac opipare cœnabant Guazuzingui & Tascaltecani, cæterique prouinciales auxiliarii, qui soliti sunt hostes in prœlio cadentes intra suos ventres sepelire; nec vetare ausus fuisset Cortesius." (De Orbe Novo, dec. 5, cap. 8.) "Y los otros les mostraban los de su Ciudad hechos pedazos, diciéndoles, que los habian de cenar aquella noche, y almorzar otro dia, como de hecho lo hacian." (Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 256.) Yet one may well be startled by the assertion of Oviedo, that the carniverous monsters fished up the bloated bodies of those drowned in the lake to swell their repast! "Ni podian ver los ojos de los Christianos, é Cathólicos mas espantable é aborrecida cosa, que ver en el Real de los Amigos confederados el continuo exercicio de comer carne asada, ó cocida de los Indios enemigos, é aun de los que mataban en las canoas, ó se ahogaban, é despues el agua los echaba en la superficie de la laguna, ó en la costa, no los dexaban de pescar, é aposentar en sus vientres." Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 24.

[34] "Y sin duda el dia pasado, y aqueste yo tenia por cierto, que vinieran de Paz, de la qual yo siempre con Victoria, y sin ella hacia todas las muestras, que podia. Y nunca por esso en ellos hallabamos alguna señal de Paz." Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 261.

CHAPTER VI

GENERAL ASSAULT ON THE CITY.—DEFEAT OF THE SPANIARDS.—THEIR DISASTROUS CONDITION.—SACRIFICE OF THE CAPTIVES.—DEFECTION OF THE ALLIES.—CONSTANCY OF THE TROOPS.

1521.

FAMINE was now gradually working its way into the heart of the beleaguered city. It seemed certain, that, with this strict blockade, the crowded population must in the end be driven to capitulate, though no arm should be raised against them. But it required time; and the Spaniards, though constant and enduring by nature, began to be impatient of hardships scarcely inferior to those experienced by the besieged. In some respects their condition was even worse, exposed, as they were, to the cold, drenching rains, which fell with little intermission, rendering their situation dreary and disastrous in the extreme.

In this state of things, there were many who would willingly have shortened their sufferings, and taken the chance of carrying the place by a *coup de main*. Others thought it would be best to get possession of the great market of Tlatelolco, which, from its situation in the north-western part of the city, might afford the means of communication with the camps of both Alvarado and Sandoval. This place, encompassed by spacious porticos, would furnish accommodations for a numerous host; and, once established in the capital, the Spaniards would be in a position to follow up the blow with far more effect than at a distance.

These arguments were pressed by several of the officers, particularly by Alderete, the royal treasurer, a person of much consideration, not only from his rank, but from the capacity and zeal he had shown in the service. In deference to their wishes, Cortés summoned a council of war, and laid the matter before it. The treasurer's views were espoused by most of the high-mettled cavaliers, who looked with eagerness to any change of their present forlorn and wearisome life; and Cortés, thinking it, probably, more prudent to adopt the less expedient course,

than to enforce a cold and reluctant obedience to his own opinion, suffered himself to be overruled.[1]

A day was fixed for the assault, which was to be made simultaneously by the two divisions under Alvarado and the commander-in-chief. Sandoval was instructed to draw off the greater part of his forces from the northern causeway, and to unite himself with Alvarado, while seventy picked soldiers were to be detached to the support of Cortés.

On the appointed morning, the two armies, after the usual celebration of mass, advanced along their respective causeways against the city.[2] They were supported, in addition to the brigantines, by a numerous fleet of Indian boats, which were to force a passage up the canals, and by a countless multitude of allies, whose very numbers served in the end to embarrass their operations. After clearing the suburbs, three avenues presented themselves, which all terminated in the square of Tlatelolco. The principal one, being of much greater width than the other two, might rather be called a causeway than a street, since it was flanked by deep canals on either side. Cortés divided his force into three bodies. One of them he placed under Alderete, with orders to occupy the principal street. A second he gave in charge to Andres de Tapia and Jorge de Alvarado; the former a cavalier of courage and capacity, the latter, a younger brother of Don Pedro, and possessed of the intrepid spirit which belonged to that chivalrous family. These were to penetrate by one of the parallel streets, while the general himself, at the head of the third division, was to occupy the other. A small body of cavalry, with two or three field pieces, was stationed as a reserve in front of the great street of Tacuba, which was designated as the rallying point for the different divisions.[3]

[1] Such is the account explicitly given by Cortés to the Emperor. (Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, p. 264.) Bernal Díaz, on the contrary, speaks of the assault as first conceived by the general himself. (Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 151.) Yet Diaz had not the best means of knowing; and Cortés would hardly have sent home a palpable misstatement that could have been so easily exposed.

[2] This punctual performance of mass by the army, in storm and in sunshine, by day and by night, among friends and enemies, draws forth a warm eulogium from the archiepiscopal editor of Cortés. "En el Campo, en una Calzada, entre Enemigos, trabajando dia, y noche, nunca se omitia la Missa, páraque toda la obra se atribuyesse á Dios, y mas en unos Meses, en que incomodan las Aguas de el Cielo; y encima del Agua las Habitaciones, ó malas Tiendas." Lorenzana, p 266, nota.

[3] In the treasurer's division, according to the general's Letter, there were 70 Spanish foot, 7 or 8 horse, and 15,000 or 20,000 Indians; in Tapia's, 80 foot, and 10,000 allies; and in his own, 8 horse, 100 infantry, and "an infinite number of allies." (Ibid., ubi supra.) The looseness of the language shows that a few thousands, more or less, were of no great moment in the estimate of the Indian force.

Cortés gave the most positive instructions to his captains, not to advance a step without securing the means of retreat, by carefully filling up the ditches, and the openings in the causeway. The neglect of this precaution by Alvarado, in an assault which he had made on the city but a few days before, had been attended with such serious consequences to his army, that Cortés rode over, himself, to his officer's quarters, for the purpose of publicly reprimanding him for his disobedience of orders. On his arrival at the camp, however, he found that his offending captain had conducted the affair with so much gallantry, that the intended reprimand—though well deserved—subsided into a mild rebuke.[4]

The arrangements being completed, the three divisions marched at once up the several streets. Cortés, dismounting, took the van of his own squadron, at the head of his infantry. The Mexicans fell back as he advanced, making less resistance than usual. The Spaniards pushed on, carrying one barricade after another, and carefully filling up the gaps with rubbish, so as to secure themselves a footing. The canoes supported the attack, by moving along the canals, and grappling with those of the enemy; while numbers of the nimble-footed Tlascalans, scaling the terraces, passed on from one house to another, where they were connected, hurling the defenders into the streets below. The enemy, taken apparently by surprise, seemed incapable of withstanding for a moment the fury of the assault; and the victorious Christians, cheered on by the shouts of triumph which arose from their companions in the adjoining streets, were only the more eager to be first at the destined goal.

Indeed, the facility of his success led the general to suspect that he might be advancing too fast; that it might be a device of the enemy to draw them into the heart of the city, and then surround or attack them in the rear. He had some misgivings, moreover, lest his too ardent officers, in the heat of the chase, should, notwithstanding his commands, have overlooked the necessary precaution of filling up the breaches. He, accordingly, brought his squadron to a halt, prepared to baffle any insidious movement of his adversary. Meanwhile he received more than one message from Alderete, informing him that he had nearly gained the market. This only increased the general's apprehension, that, in the rapidity of his advance, he might have neglected to secure the ground. He determined to trust

[4] "Otro dia de mañana acordé de ir á su Real para le reprehender lo pasado. . . . . Y visto, no les imputé tanta culpa, como antes parecia tener, y platicado cerca de lo que habia de hacer, yo me bolví á nuestro Real aquel dia. Ibid., pp. 263, 264.

no eyes but his own, and, taking a small body of troops, proceeded at once to reconnoitre the route followed by the treasurer.

He had not proceeded far along the great street, or causeway, when his progress was arrested by an opening ten or twelve paces wide, and filled with water, at least two fathoms deep, by which a communication was formed between the canals on the opposite sides. A feeble attempt had been made to stop the gap with the rubbish of the causeway, but in too careless a manner to be of the least service; and a few straggling stones and pieces of timber only showed that the work had been abandoned almost as soon as begun.[5] To add to his consternation, the general observed that the sides of the causeway in this neighborhood had been pared off, and, as was evident, very recently. He saw in all this the artifice of the cunning enemy; and had little doubt that his hot-headed officer had rushed into a snare deliberately laid for him. Deeply alarmed, he set about repairing the mischief as fast as possible, by ordering his men to fill up the yawning chasm.

But they had scarcely begun their labors, when the hoarse echoes of conflict in the distance were succeeded by a hideous sound of mingled yells and war-whoops, that seemed to rend the very heavens. This was followed by a rushing noise, as of the tread of thronging multitudes, showing that the tide of battle was turned back from its former course, and was rolling on towards the spot where Cortés and his little band of cavaliers were planted.

His conjecture proved too true. Alderete had followed the retreating Aztecs with an eagerness which increased with every step of his advance. He had carried the barricades, which had defended the breach, without much difficulty, and, as he swept on, gave orders that the opening should be stopped. But the blood of the high-spirited cavaliers was warmed by the chase, and no one cared to be detained by the ignoble occupation of filling up the ditches, while he could gather laurels so easily in the fight; and they all pressed on, exhorting and cheering one another with the assurance of being the first to reach the square of Tlatelolco. In this way they suffered themselves to be decoyed into the heart of the city; when suddenly the horn of Gua-

[5] "Y hallé, que habian pasado una quebrada de la Calle, que era de diez, ó doce pasos de ancho; y el Agua, que por ella pasaba, era de hondura de mas de dos estados, y al tiempo que la pasáron habian echado en ella madera, y cañas de carrizo, y como pasaban pocos á pocos, y con tiento, no se habia hundido la madera y cañas." Ibid., p. 268.—See also Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 48.

temozin—the sacred symbol, heard only in seasons of extraordinary peril—sent forth a long and piercing note from the summit of a neighboring *teocalli*. In an instant, the flying Aztecs, as if maddened by the blast, wheeled about, and turned on their pursuers. At the same time, countless swarms of warriors from the adjoining streets and lanes poured in upon the flanks of the assailants, filling the air with the fierce, unearthly cries which had reached the ears of Cortés, and drowning, for a moment, the wild dissonance which reigned in the other quarters of the capital.[6]

The army, taken by surprise, and shaken by the fury of the assault, were thrown into the utmost disorder. Friends and foes, white men and Indians, were mingled together in one promiscuous mass. Spears, swords, and war-clubs were brandished together in the air. Blows fell at random. In their eagerness to escape, they trod down one another. Blinded by the missiles, which now reigned on them from the *azoteas*, they staggered on, scarcely knowing in what direction, or fell, struck down by hands which they could not see. On they came like a rushing torrent sweeping along some steep declivity, and rolling in one confused tide towards the open breach, on the further side of which stood Cortés and his companions, horror-struck at the sight of the approaching ruin. The foremost files soon plunged into the gulf, treading one another under the flood, some striving ineffectually to swim, others, with more success, to clamber over the heaps of their suffocated comrades. Many, as they attempted to scale the opposite sides of the slippery dike, fell into the water, or were hurried off by the warriors in the canoes, who added to the horrors the rout by the fresh storm of darts and javelins, which they poured on the fugitives.

Cortés, meanwhile, with his brave followers, kept his station undaunted on the other side of the breach. "I had made up my mind," he says, "to die, rather than desert my poor followers in their extremity!"[7] With outstretched hands he endeavored to

[6] Gomara, Crónica, cap. 138.—Ixtlilxochitl, Venida de los Esp., p. 37.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 26.

Guatemozin's horn rung in the ears of Bernal Diaz, for many a day after the battle. "Guatemuz, y manda tocar su corneta, q̃ era vna señal q̃ quando aquella se tocasse, era q̃ auian de pelear sus Capitanes de manera, q̃ hiziessen presa, ó morir sobre ello; y retumbaua el sonido, q̃ se metia en los oidos, y de q̃ lo oyérõ aquellos sus esquadrones, y Capitanes; saber yo aquí dezir aora, con q̃ rabia, y esfuerço se metian entre nosotros á nos echar mano, es cosa de espanto." Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 152.

[7] "É como el negocio fué tan de súpito, y ví que mataban la Gente, determiné de me quedar alí, y morir peleando." Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, p 268.

rescue as many as he could from the watery grave, and from the more appalling fate of captivity. He as vainly tried to restore something like presence of mind and order among the distracted fugitives. His person was too well known to the Aztecs, and his position now made him a conspicuous mark for their weapons. Darts, stones, and arrows fell around him thick as hail, but glanced harmless from his steel helmet and armor of proof. At length a cry of "Malinche," "Malinche," arose among the enemy; and six of their number, strong and athletic warriors, rushing on him at once, made a violent effort to drag him on board their boat. In the struggle he received a severe wound in the leg, which, for the time, disabled it. There seemed to be no hope for him; when a faithful follower, Christóval de Olea, perceiving his general's extremity, threw himself on the Aztecs, and with a blow cut off the arm of one savage, and then plunged his sword in the body of another. He was quickly supported by a comrade named Lerma, and by a Tlascalan chief, who, fighting over the prostrate body of Cortés, despatched three more of the assailants, though the heroic Olea paid dearly for his self-devotion, as he fell mortally wounded by the side of his general.[8]

[8] Ixtlilxochitl, who would fain make his royal kinsman a sort of residuary legatee for all unappropriate, or even doubtful, acts of heroism, puts in a sturdy claim for him on this occasion. A painting, he says, on one of the gates of a monastery of Tlatelolco, long recorded the fact, that it was the Tezcucan chief who saved the life of Cortés. (Venida de los Esp., p. 38.) But Camargo gives the full credit of it to Olea, on the testimony of "a famous Tlascalan warrior," present in the action, who reported it to him. (Hist. de Tlascala, MS.) The same is stoutly maintained by Bernal Diaz, the townsman of Olea, to whose memory he pays a hearty tribute, as one of the best men and bravest soldiers in the army. (Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 152, 204.) Saavedra, the poetic chronicler,—something more of chronicler than poet,—who came on the stage before all that had borne arms in the Conquest had left it, gives the laurel also to Olea, whose fate he commemorates in verses, that, at least, aspire to historic fidelity.

Túvole con las manos abraçado.
Y Francisco de Olea el valeroso,
Vn valiente Español, y su criado,
Le tiró vn tajo brauo y riguroso:
Las dos manos á cercen le ha cortado,
Y él le libró del trance trabajoso.
Huuo muy gran rumor, porque dezian,
Que ya en prision amarga le tenian.

"Llegáron otros Indios arriscados,
Y á Olea matáron en vn punto,
Cercaron á Cortés por todos lados,
Y al miserable cuerpo ya difunto:
Y viendo sus sentidos recobrados,
Puso mano á la espada y daga junto.
Antonio de Quiñones llegó luego,
Capitan de la guarda ardiendo en fuego."
El Peregrino Indiano, Canto 20.

The report soon spread among the soldiers, that their commander was taken; and Quiñones, the captain of his guard, with several others, pouring in to the rescue, succeeded in disentangling Cortés from the grasp of his enemies who were struggling with him in the water, and, raising him in their arms, placed him again on the causeway. One of his pages, meanwhile, had advanced some way through the press, leading a horse for his master to mount. But the youth received a wound in the throat from a javelin, which prevented him from effecting his object. Another of his attendants was more successful. It was Guzman, his chamberlain; but, as he held the bridle, while Cortés was assisted into the saddle, he was snatched away by the Aztecs, and, with the swiftness of thought, hurried off by their canoes. The general still lingered, unwilling to leave the spot, while his presence could be of the least service. But the faithful Quiñones, taking his horse by the bridle, turned his head from the breach, exclaiming, at the same time, that "his master's life was too important to the army to be thrown away there."[9]

Yet it was no easy matter to force a passage through the press. The surface of the causeway, cut up by the feet of men and horses, was knee-deep in mud, and in some parts was so much broken, that the water from the canals flowed over it. The crowded mass, in their efforts to extricate themselves from their perilous position, staggered to and fro like a drunken man. Those on the flanks were often forced by the lateral pressure of their comrades down the slippery sides of the dike, where they were picked up by the canoes of the enemy, whose shouts of triumph proclaimed the savage joy with which they gathered in every new victim for the sacrifice. Two cavaliers, riding by the general's side, lost their footing, and rolled down the declivity into the water. One was taken and his horse killed. The other was happy enough to escape. The valiant ensign, Corral, had a similar piece of good fortune. He slipped into the canal, and the enemy felt sure of their prize, when he again succeeded in recovering the causeway with the tattered banner of Castile still flying above his head. The barbarians set up a cry of disappointed rage, as they lost possession of a trophy, to which the people of Anahuac attached, as we have seen, the highest importance, hardly inferior in their eyes to the capture of the commander-in-chief himself.[10]

[9] "É aquel Capitan que estaba con el General, que se decia Antonio de Quiñones, díxole: Vamos, Señor, de aquí, y salvemos vuestra Persona, pues que ya esto está de manera, que es morir desesperado atender; é sin vos, ninguno de nosotros puede escapar, que no es esfuerzo, sino poquedad, porfiar aquí otra cosa." Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 26.

[10] It may have been the same banner which is noticed by Mr. Bullock, as

Cortés at length succeeded in regaining the firm ground, and reaching the open place before the great street of Tacuba. Here, under a sharp fire of the artillery, he rallied his broken squadrons, and, charging at the head of the little body of horse, which, not having been brought into action, were still fresh, he beat off the enemy. He then commanded the retreat of the two other divisions. The scattered forces again united; and the general, sending forward his Indian confederates, took the rear with a chosen body of cavalry to cover the retreat of the army, which was effected with but little additional loss.[11]

Andres de Tapia was despatched to the western causeway to acquaint Alvarado and Sandoval with the failure of the enterprise. Meanwhile the two captains had penetrated far into the city. Cheered by the triumphant shouts of their countrymen in the adjacent streets, they had pushed on with extraordinary vigor, that they might not be outstripped in the race of glory. They had almost reached the market-place, which lay nearer to their quarters than to the general's, when they heard the blast from the dread horn of Guatemozin,[12] followed by the overpowering yell of the barbarians, which had so startled the ears of Cortés; till at length the sounds of the receding conflict died away in the distance. The two captains now understood that the day must have gone hard with their countrymen. They soon had further proof of it, when the victorious Aztecs, returning from the pursuit of Cortés, joined their forces to those engaged with Sandoval and Alvarado, and fell on them with redoubled fury. At the same time they rolled on the ground two or three of the bloody heads of the Spaniards, shouting the name of "Malinche." The captains, struck with horror at the spectacle,—though they gave little credit to the words of the enemy,—instantly ordered a re-

treasured up in the Hospital of Jesus, "where," says he, "we beheld the identical embroidered standard, under which the great captain wrested this immense empire from the unfortunate Montezuma." Six Months in Mexico, vol. I. chap. 10.

[11] For this disastrous affair, besides the Letter of Cortés, and the Chronicle of Diaz, so often quoted, see Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva Esp., MS., lib. 12, cap. 33,—Camargo, Hist. de Tlascala, MS.,—Gomara, Crónica, cap. 138,—Torquemada, Monarch. Ind., lib. 4, cap. 94,—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 26, 48.

[12] "El resonido de la corneta de Guatemuz."—Astolfo's magic horn was not more terrible.

"Dico che 'l corno è di sì orribil suono,
Ch' ovunque s' oda, fa fuggir la gente.
Non può trovarsi al mondo un cor sì buono,
Che possa non fuggir come lo sente.
Rumor di vento e di tremuoto, e 'l tuono,
A par del suon di questo, era niente."
ORLANDO FURIOSO, Canto 15, st. 15.

treat. Indeed, it was not in their power to maintain their ground against the furious assaults of the besieged, who poured on them, swarm after swarm, with a desperation, of which, says one who was there, "although it seems as if it were now present to my eyes, I can give but a faint idea to the reader. God alone could have brought us off safe from the perils of that day."[13] The fierce barbarians followed up the Spaniards to their very intrenchments. But here they were met, first by the cross fire of the brigantines, which, dashing through the palisades planted to obstruct their movements, completely enfiladed the causeway, and next by that of the small battery erected in front of the camp, which, under the management of a skilful engineer, named Medrano, swept the whole length of the defile. Thus galled in front and on flank, the shattered columns of the Aztecs were compelled to give way and take shelter under the defences of the city.

The greatest anxiety now prevailed in the camp, regarding the fate of Cortés; for Tapia had been detained on the road by scattered parties of the enemy, whom Guatemozin had stationed there to interrupt the communications between the camps. He arrived, at length, however, though bleeding from several wounds. His intelligence, while it reassured the Spaniards as to the general's personal safety, was not calculated to allay their uneasiness in other respects.

Sandoval, in particular, was desirous to acquaint himself with the actual state of things, and the further intentions of Cortés. Suffering as he was from three wounds, which he had received in that day's fight, he resolved to visit in person the quarters of the commander-in-chief. It was mid-day,—for the busy scenes of the morning had occupied but a few hours,—when Sandoval remounted the good steed, on whose strength and speed he knew he could rely. It was a noble animal, well-known throughout the army, and worthy of its gallant rider, whom it had carried safe through all the long marches and bloody battles of the conquest.[14] On the way he fell in with

[13] "Por q̃ yo no lo sé aquí escriuir q̃ aora q̃ me pongo á pensar en ello, es como si visiblemente lo viesse, mas bueluo á dezir, y ansí es verdad, q̃ si Dios no nos diera esfuerço, segun estauamos todos heridos: él nos saluó, q̃ de otra manera no nos podiamos llegar á nuestros ranchos." Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 152.

[14] This renowned steed, who might rival the Babieca of the Cid, was named Motilla, and, when one would pass unqualified praise on a horse, he would say, "He is as good as Motilla." So says that prince of chroniclers, Diaz, who takes care that neither beast nor man shall be defrauded of his fair guerdon in these campaigns against the infidel. He was of a chestnut color, it seems, with a star in his forehead, and, luckily for his credit, with only one foot white. See Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 152. 205.

Guatemozin's scouts, who gave him chase, and showered around him volleys of missiles, which fortunately found no vulnerable point in his own harness, or that of his well-barbed charger.

On arriving at the camp, he found the troops there much worn and dispirited by the disaster of the morning. They had good reason to be so. Besides the killed, and a long file of wounded, sixty-two Spaniards, with a multitude of allies, had fallen alive into the hands of the enemy,—an enemy who was never known to spare a captive. The loss of two field-pieces and seven horses crowned their own disgrace and the triumphs of the Aztecs. This loss, so insignificant in European warfare, was a great one here, where both horses and artillery, the most powerful arms of war against the barbarians, were not to be procured without the greatest cost and difficulty.[15]

Cortés, it was observed, had borne himself thoughout this trying day with his usual intrepidity and coolness. The only time he was seen to falter was when the Mexicans threw down before him the heads of several Spaniards, shouting at the same time, "Sandoval," "Tonatiuh," the well-known epithet of Alvarado. At the sight of the gory trophies, he grew deadly pale,—but, in a moment recovering his usual confidence, he endeavored to cheer up the drooping spirits of his followers. It was with a cheerful countenance, that he now received his lieutenant; but a shade of sadness was visible through this outward composure, showing how the catastrophe of the *puente cuidada*, "the sorrowful bridge," as he mournfully called it, lay heavy at his heart.

To the cavalier's anxious inquiries, as to the cause of the disaster, he replied: "It is for my sins, that it has befallen me, son Sandoval"; for such was the affectionate epithet with which Cortés often addressed his best-beloved and trusty officer. He then explained to him the immediate cause, in the negligence of the treasurer. Further conversation followed, in which the general declared his purpose to forego active hostilities for a few days. "You must take my place," he continued, "for I am too much crippled at present to discharge my duties. You must watch over the safety of the camps. Give especial heed to Alvarado's. He is a gallant soldier, I know it well; but I doubt the Mexican hounds may, some hour, take him at dis-

[15] The cavaliers might be excused for not wantonly venturing their horses, if, as Diaz asserts, they could only be replaced at an expense of eight hundred, or a thousand dollars apiece. "Porque costaua en aquella sazon vn cauallo ochocientos pesos, y aun algunos costauan á mas de mil." Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 151. See also Ante, Book II. chap. 3, note 14

advantage."[16] These few words showed the general's own estimate of his two lieutenants both equally brave and chivalrous; but the one uniting with these qualities the circumspection so essential to success in perilous enterprises, in which the other was signally deficient. The future conqueror of Guatemala had to gather wisdom, as usual, from the bitter fruits of his own errors. It was under the training of Cortés that he learned to be a soldier.—The general, having concluded his instructions, affectionately embraced his lieutenant, and dismissed him to his quarters.

It was late in the afternoon when he reached them; but the sun was still lingering above the western hills, and poured his beams wide over the Valley, lighting up the old towers and temples of Tenochtitlan with a mellow radiance, that little harmonized with the dark scenes of strife, in which the city had so lately been involved. The tranquillity of the hour, however, was, on a sudden, broken by the strange sounds of the great drum in the temple of the war-god,—sounds which recalled the *noche triste*, with all its terrible images, to the minds of the Spaniards, for that was the only occasion on which they had ever heard them.[17] They intimated some solemn act of religion within the unhallowed precincts of the *teocalli*; and the soldiers, startled by the mournful vibrations, which might be heard for leagues across the Valley, turned their eyes to the quarter whence they proceeded. They there beheld a long procession winding up the huge sides of the pyramid; for the camp of Alvarado was pitched scarcely a mile from the city, and objects are distinctly visible, at a great distance, in the transparent atmosphere of the table-land.

As the long file of priests and warriors reached the flat summit of the *teocalli*, the Spaniards saw the figures of several men stripped to their waists, some of whom, by the whiteness of their skins, they recognized as their own countrymen. They were the victims for sacrifice. Their heads were gaudily decorated with coronals of plumes, and they carried fans in their hands. They were urged along by blows, and compelled to take part in the dances in honor of the Aztec war-god. The unfortunate captives, then stripped of their sad finery, were stretched, one after another, on the great stone of sacrifice. On its convex surface,

[16] "Mira pues veis que yo no puedo ir á todas partes, á vos os encomiendo estos trabajos, pues veis q estoy herido y coxo; ruego os pongais cobro en estos tres reales; bien sé q Pedro de Aluarado, y sus Capitanes, y soldados aurán batallado, y hecho como caualleros, mas temo el gran poder destos perros no les ayan desbaratado." Ibid., cap. 152.

[17] "Vn atambor de muy triste sonido, enfin como instrumento de demonios, y retumbaua tanto, que se oia dos, ó tres leguas." Ibid., loc. cit.

their breasts were heaved up conveniently for the diabolical purpose of the priestly executioner, who cut asunder the ribs by a strong blow with his sharp razor of *itztli*, and, thrusting his hand into the wound, tore away the heart, which, hot and reeking, was deposited on the golden censer before the idol. The body of the slaughtered victim was then hurled down the steep stairs of the pyramid, which, it may be remembered, were placed at the same angle of the pile, one flight below another; and the mutilated remains were gathered up by the savages beneath, who soon prepared with them the cannibal repast which completed the work of abomination![18]

We may imagine with what sensations the stupefied Spaniards must have gazed on this horrid spectacle, so near that they could almost recognize the persons of their unfortunate friends, see the struggles and writhing of their bodies, hear—or fancy that they heard—their screams of agony! yet so far removed, that they could render them no assistance. Their limbs trembled beneath them, as they thought what might one day be their own fate; and the bravest among them, who had hitherto gone to battle, as careless and light-hearted, as to the banquet or the ball-room, were unable, from this time forward, to encounter their ferocious enemy without a sickening feeling, much akin to fear, coming over them.[19]

Such was not the effect produced by this spectacle on the

[18] Ibid., ubi supra.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 48.

"Sacándoles los corazones, sobre una piedra que era como un pilar cortado, tan grueso como unhombre y algo mas, y tan alto como medio estadio; allí á cada uno echado de espaldas sobre aquella piedra, que se llama Techcatl, uno le tiraba por un brazo, y otro por el otro, y tambien por las piernas otros dos, y venia uno de aquellos Sátrapas, con un pedernal, como un hierro de lanza enhastado, en un palo de dos palmos, de largo, le daba un golpe con ambas manos en el pecho; y sacando aquel pedernal, por la misma llaga metia la mano, y arrancábale el corazon, y luego fregaba con él la boca del Idolo; y echaba á rodar el cuerpo por las gradas abajo, que serian como cinquenta ó sesenta gradas, por allí abajo iba quebrando las piernas y los brazos, y dando cabezasos con la cabeza, *hasta que llegaba abajo aun vivo.*" Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva Esp., MS., lib. 12, cap. 35.

[19] At least, such is the honest confession of Captain Diaz, as stout-hearted a soldier as any in the army. He consoles himself, however, with the reflection, that the tremor of his limbs intimated rather an excess of courage than a want of it, since it arose from a lively sense of the great dangers into which his daring spirit was about to hurry him! The passage in the original affords a good specimen of the inimitable *naïveté* of the old chronicler. "Digan agora todos aquellos caualleros, que desto del militar entienden, y se han hallado en trances peligrosos de muerte, á que fin echarán mi temor, si es á mucha flaqueza de ánimo, ó á mucho esfuerço, porque como he dicho, sentia yo en mi pensamiento, que auia de poner por mi persona, batallando en parte que por fuerça auia de temer la muerte mas que otros vezes, y por esto me temblaua el coraçon, y temia la muerte." Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 156.

Mexican forces, gathered at the end of the causeway. Like vultures maddened by the smell of distant carrion, they set up a piercing cry, and, as they shouted that "such would be the fate of all their enemies," swept along in one fierce torrent over the dike. But the Spaniards were not to be taken by surprise; and, before the barbarian horde had come within their lines, they opened such a deadly fire from their battery of heavy guns, supported by the musketry and crossbows, that the assailants were compelled to fall back slowly, but fearfully mangled, to their former position.

The five following days passed away in a state of inaction, except, indeed, so far as was necessary to repel the *sorties*, made, from time to time, by the militia of the capital. The Mexicans, elated with their success, meanwhile, abandoned themselves to jubilee; singing, dancing, and feasting on the mangled relics of their wretched victims. Guatemozin sent several heads of the Spaniards, as well as of the horses, round the country, calling on his old vassals to forsake the banners of the white men, unless they would share the doom of the enemies of Mexico. The priests now cheered the young monarch and the people with the declaration, that the dread Huitzilpochtli, their offended deity, appeased by the sacrifices offered up on his altars, would again take the Aztecs under his protection, and deliver their enemies, before the expiration of eight days, into their hands.[20]

This comfortable prediction, confidently believed by the Mexicans, was thundered in the ears of the besieging army in tones of exultation and defiance. However it may have been contemned by the Spaniards, it had a very different effect on their allies. The latter had begun to be disgusted with a service so full of peril and suffering, and already protracted far beyond the usual term of Indian hostilities. They had less confidence than before in the Spaniards. Experience had shown that they were neither invincible nor immortal, and their recent reverses made them even distrust the ability of the Christians to reduce the Aztec metropolis. They recalled to mind the ominous words of Xicotencatl, that "so sacrilegious a war could come to no good for the people of Anahuac." They felt that their arm was raised against the gods of their country. The prediction of the oracle fell heavy on their hearts. They had little doubt of its fulfil-

[20] Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 3, lib. 2, cap. 20.—Ixtlilxochitl, Venida de los Esp., pp. 41, 42

"Y nos dezian, que de ai á ocho dias no auia de quedar ninguno de nosotros á vida, porque assí se lo auian prometido la noche antes sus Dioses." Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 153.

ment, and were only eager to turn away the bolt from their own heads by a timely secession from the cause.

They took advantage, therefore, of the friendly cover of night to steal away from their quarters. Company after company deserted in this manner, taking the direction of their respective homes. Those belonging to the great towns of the Valley, whose allegiance was the most recent, were the first to cast it off. Their example was followed by the older confederates, the militia of Cholula, Tepeaca, Tezcuco, and even the faithful Tlascala. There were, it is true, some exceptions to these, and among them, Ixtlilxochitl, the young lord of Tezcuco, and Chichemecatl, the valiant Tlascalan chieftain, who, with a few of their immediate followers, still remained true to the banner under which they had enlisted. But their number was insignificant.—The Spaniards beheld with dismay the mighty array, on which they relied for support, thus silently melting away before the breath of superstition. Cortés alone maintained a cheerful countenence. He treated the prediction with contempt, as an invention of the priests, and sent his messengers after the retreating squadrons, beseeching them to postpone their departure, or at least to halt on the road, till the time, which would soon elapse, should show the falsehood of the prophecy.

The affairs of the Spaniards, at this crisis, must be confessed to have worn a gloomy aspect. Deserted by their allies, with their ammunition nearly exhausted, cut off from the customary supplies from the neighborhood, harassed by unintermitting vigils and fatigues, smarting under wounds, of which every man in the army had his share, with an unfriendly country in their rear, and a mortal foe in front, they might well be excused for faltering in their enterprise. They found abundant occupation by day in foraging the country, and in maintaining their position on the causeways against the enemy, now made doubly daring by success, and by the promises of their priests ; while at night their slumbers were disturbed by the beat of the melancholy drum, the sounds of which, booming far over the waters, tolled the knell of their murdered comrades. Night after night fresh victims were led up to the great altar of sacrifice ; and, while the city blazed with the illumination of a thousand bonfires on the terraced roofs of the dwellings, and in the areas of the temples, the dismal pageant, showing through the fiery glare like the work of the ministers of hell, was distinctly visible from the camp below. One of the last of the sufferers was Guzman, the unfortunate chamberlain of Cortés, who lingered in captivity eighteen days before he met his doom.[21]

[21] Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva Esp., MS., lib. 12, cap. 36.—Ixtlilxochitl, Venida de los Esp., pp. 41, 42.

Yet in this hour of trial the Spaniards did not falter. Had they faltered, they might have learned a lesson of fortitude from some of their own wives, who continued with them in the camp, and who displayed a heroism, on this occasion, of which history has preserved several examples. One of these, protected by her husband's armor, would frequently mount guard in his place, when he was wearied. Another, hastily putting on a soldier's *escaupil*, and seizing a sword and lance, was seen, on one occasion, to rally their retreating countrymen, and lead them back against the enemy. Cortés would have persuaded these Amazonian dames to remain at Tlascala; but they proudly replied, "It was the duty of Castilian wives not to abandon their husbands in danger, but to share it with them,—and die with them, if necessary." And well did they do their duty.[22]

Amidst all the distresses and multiplied embarrassments of their situation, the Spaniards still remained true to their purpose. They relaxed in no degree the severity of the blockade. Their camps still occupied the only avenues to the city; and their batteries, sweeping the long defiles at every fresh assault of the Aztecs, mowed down hundreds of the assailants. Their brigantines still rode on the waters, cutting off the communication with the shore. It is true, indeed, the loss of the auxiliary canoes left a passage open for the occasional introduction of supplies to the capital.[23] But the whole amount of these supplies was small; and its crowded population, while exulting in their temporary advantage, and the delusive assurances of their priests, were beginning to sink under the withering grasp of an enemy within, more terrible than the one which lay before their gates.

The Castilian scholar will see that I have not drawn on my imagination for the picture of these horrors. "Digamos aora lo que los Mexicanos hazian de noche en sus grandes, y altos Cues; y es, q tañian su maldito atambor, que dixe otra vez que era el de mas maldito sondio, y mas triste q se podia inuētar, y sonaua muy lexos; y tañian otros peores instrumentos. En fin, cosas diabólicas, y teniā grandes lumbres, y dauā grādíssimos gritos, y siluos, y en aquel instāte estauan sacrificando de nuestros cōpañeros, de los q tomárō á Cortés, que supímos q sacrificáron diez dias arreo, hasta que los acabáron, y el postrero dexárō á Christoual de Guzman, q viuo lo tuuiéron diez y ocho dias, segundixérō tres Capitanes Mexicanos q prēdímos." Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 153.

[22] "Que no era bien, que Mugeres Castellanas dexasen á sus Maridos, iendo á la Guerra, i que adonde ellos muriesen, moririan ellas." (Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 3, lib. 1, cap. 22.) The historian has embalmed the names of several of these heroines in his pages, who are, doubtless, well entitled to share the honors of the Conquest; Beatriz de Palacios, María de Estrada, Juana Martin Isabel Rodriguez, and Beatriz Bermudez.

[23] Ibid., ubi supra.

CHAPTER VII.

SUCCESSES OF THE SPANIARDS.—FRUITLESS OFFERS TO GUATEMOZIN.—BUILDINGS RAZED TO THE GROUND.—TERRIBLE FAMINE.—THE TROOPS GAIN THE MARKET-PLACE.—BATTERING ENGINE.

1521.

THUS passed away the eight days prescribed by the oracle; and the sun, which rose upon the ninth, beheld the fair city still beset on every side by the inexorable foe. It was a great mistake of the Aztec priests,—one not uncommon with false prophets, anxious to produce a startling impression on their followers,—to assign so short a term for the fulfilment of their prediction.[1]

The Tezcucan and Tlascalan chiefs now sent to acquaint their troops with the failure of the prophecy, and to ecall them to the Christian camp. The Tlascalans, who had halted, on the way, returned, ashamed of their credulity, and with ancient feelings of animosity, heightened by the artifice of which they had been the dupes. Their example was followed by many of the other confederates, with the levity natural to a people whose convictions are the result, not of reason, but of superstition. In a short time the Spanish general found himself at the head of an auxiliary force, which, if not so numerous as before, was more than adequate to all his purposes. He received them with politic benignity; and, while he reminded them that they had been guilty of a great crime in thus abandoning their commander, he was willing to overlook it in consideration of their past services. They must be aware that these services were not necessary to the Spaniards, who had carried on the siege with the same vigor during their absence, as when they were present. But he was unwilling that those, who had shared the dangers of the war with him, should not also partake its tri-

[1] And yet the priests were not so much to blame, if, as Solís assures us, "the Devil went about very industriously in those days, insinuating into the ears of his flock, what he could not into their hearts." Conquista, lib. 5. cap. 22.

umphs, and be present at the fall of their enemy, which, he promised, with a confidence better founded than that of the priests in their prediction, should not be long delayed.

Yet the menaces and machinations of Guatemozin were still not without effect in the distant provinces. Before the full return of the confederates, Cortés received an embassy from Cuernavaca, ten or twelve leagues distant, and another from some friendly towns of the Otomies, still further off, imploring his protection against their formidable neighbors, who menaced them with hostilities, as allies of the Spaniards. As the latter were then situated, they were in a condition to receive succor much more than to give it.[2] Most of the officers were accordingly opposed to granting a request, the compliance with which must still further impair their diminished strength. But Cortés knew the importance, above all, of not betraying his own inability to grant it, "The greater our weakness," he said, "the greater need have we to cover it under a show of strength."[3]

He immediately detached Tapia with a body of about a hundred men in one direction, and Sandoval with a somewhat larger force in the other, with orders that their absence should not in any event be prolonged beyond ten days.[4] The two captains executed their commission promptly and effectually. They each met and defeated his adversary in a pitched battle; laid waste the hostile territories, and returned within the time prescribed. They were soon followed by ambassadors from the conquered places, soliciting the alliance of the Spaniards; and the affair terminated by an accession of new confederates, and, what was more important, a conviction in the old, that the Spaniards were both willing and competent to protect them.

Fortune, who seldom dispenses her frowns or her favors single-handed, further showed her good-will to the Spaniards, at this time, by sending a vessel into Vera Cruz laden with ammunition and military stores. It was part of the fleet destined for the Florida coast by the romantic old knight, Ponce de Leon. The cargo was immediately taken by the authorities of the port, and forwarded, without delay, to the camp, where it arrived most seasonably, as the want of powder, in particular, had begun to be

[2] "Y teniamos necesidad antes de ser socorridos, que de dar socorro." Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 272.

[3] "God knows," says the general, "the peril in which we all stood; pero como nos convenia mostrar mas esfuerzo y ánimo, que nunca, iy morir peleando, disimulabamos nuestra flaqueza assí con los Amigos como con los Enemigos." Ibid., p. 275.

[4] Tapia's force consisted of 10 horse and 80 foot; the chief alguacil, as Sandoval was styled, had 18 horse and 100 infantry. Ibid., loc. cit.—Also Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 26.

seriously felt.[5] With strength thus renovated, Cortés determined to resume active operations, but on a plan widely differing from that pursued before.

In the former deliberations on the subject, two courses, as we have seen, presented themselves to the general. One was, to intrench himself in the heart of the capital, and from this point carry on hostilities; the other was the mode of proceeding hitherto followed. Both were open to serious objections, which he hoped would be obviated by the one now adopted. This was, to advance no step without securing the entire safety of the army, not only on its immediate retreat, but in its future inroads. Every breach in the causeway, every canal in the streets, was to be filled up in so solid a manner, that the work should not be again disturbed. The materials for this were to be furnished by the buildings, every one of which, as the army advanced, whether public or private, hut, temple, or palace, was to be demolished! Not a building in their path was to be spared. They were all indiscriminately to be levelled, until, in the Conqueror's own language, "the water should be converted into dry land," and a smooth and open ground be afforded for the manœuvres of the cavalry and artillery![6]

Cortés came to this terrible determination with great difficulty. He sincerely desired to spare the city, "the most beautiful thing in the world,"[7] as he enthusiastically styles it, and which would have formed the most glorious trophy of his conquest. But, in a place, where every house was a fortress, and every street was cut up by canals so embarrassing to his movements, experience proved it was vain to think of doing so, and becoming master of it. There was as little hope of a peaceful accommodation with the Aztecs, who, so far from being broken by all they had hitherto endured, and the long perspective of

[5] "Pólvora y Ballestas, de que teniamos muy estrema necesidad." (Rel. Terc. de Cortés. ap. Lorenzana, p. 278.) It was probably the expedition in which Ponce de Leon lost his life: an expedition to the very land which the chivalrous cavalier had himself first visited in quest of the Fountain of Health. The story is pleasantly told by Irving, as the reader may remember, in his "Companions of Columbus."

[6] The calm and simple manner, in which the *Conquistador*, as usual, states this in his *Commentaries*, has something appalling in it from its very simplicity. "Acordê de tomar un medio para nuestra seguridad, y para poder mas estrechar á los Enemigos; y fué que como fuessemos ganando por las Calles de la Ciudad, que fuessen derrocando todas las Casas de ellas, del un lado, y del otro; por manera, que no fuessemos un paso adelante, sin lo dejar todo solado, y lo que era Agua, hacerlo Tierra-firme, aunque hobiesse toda la dilacion, que se pudiesse seguir." Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, p. 279.

[7] "Porque era la mas hermosa cosa del Mundo." Ibid., p. 278.

future woes, showed a spirit as haughty and implacable as ever.[8]

The general's intentions were learned by the Indian allies with unbounded satisfaction; and they answered his call for aid by thousands of pioneers, armed with their *coas*, or hoes of the country, all testifying the greatest alacrity in helping on the work of destruction.[9] In a short time the breaches in the great causeways were filled up so effectually that they were never again molested. Cortés, himself, set the example by carrying stones and timber with his own hands.[10] The buildings in the suburbs were then thoroughly levelled, the canals were filled up with the rubbish, and a wide space around the city was thrown open to the manœuvres of the cavalry, who swept over it free and unresisted. The Mexicans did not look with indifference on these preparations to lay waste their town, and leave them bare and unprotected against the enemy. They made incessant efforts to impede the labors of the besiegers; but the latter, under cover of their guns, which kept up an unintermitting fire, still advanced in the work of desolation.[11]

The gleam of fortune, which had so lately broken out on the Mexicans, again disappeared; and the dark mist, after having been raised for a moment, settled on the doomed capital more heavily than before. Famine, with all her hideous train of woes, was making rapid strides among its accumulated population. The stores provided for the siege were exhausted. The casual supply of human victims, or that obtained by some straggling pirogue from the neighboring shores, was too inconsiderable to be widely felt.[12] Some forced a scanty sustenance from a mu-

[8] "Mas antes en el pelear, y en todos sus ardides, los hallabamos con mas ánimo, que nunca." Ibid., p. 279.

[9] Yet we shall hardly credit the Tezcucan historian's assertion, that a hundred thousand Indians flocked to the camp for this purpose! "Viniesen todos los labradores con sus coas para este efecto con toda brevedad: ..... llegáron *mas de cien mil de ellos*." Ixtlilxochitl, Venida de los Esp., p. 42.

[10] Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 153.

[11] Sahagun who gathered the story from the actors, and from the aspect of the scene, before the devastation had been wholly repaired, writes with the animation of an eye-witness. "La guerra por agua y por tierra fué tan porfiada y tan sangrienta, que era espanto de verla, y no hay posibilidad, para decir las particularidades que pasaban; eran tan espesas las saetas, y dardos, y piedras, y palos, que se arrojavan los unos á los otros, que quitavan la claridad del sol; era tan grande la vocer ía, y grita, de hombres y mugeres, y niños que voceaban y lloraban, que era cosa de grima; era tan grande la polvareda, y ruido, en derrocar y quemar casas, y robar lo que en ellas habia, y cautivar niños y mugeres, *qui parecia un juicio*." Hist. de Nueva Esp., MS., lib. 12, cap. 38.

[12] The flesh of the Christians failed to afford them even the customary nourishment, since the Mexicans said it was intolerably bitter; a miracle,

cilaginous substance, gathered in small quantities on the surface of the lake and canals.[13] Others appeased the cravings of appetite by devouring rats, lizards, and the like loathsome reptiles, which had not yet deserted the starving city. Its days seemed to be already numbered. But the page of history has many an example, to show that there are no limits to the endurance of which humanity is capable, when animated by hatred and despair.

With the sword thus suspended over it, the Spanish commander, desirous to make one more effort to save the capital, persuaded three Aztec nobles, taken in one of the late actions, to bear a message from him to Guatemozin; though they undertook it with reluctance, for fear of the consequences to themselves. Cortés told the emperor, that all had now been done that brave men could do in defence of their country. There remained no hope, no chance of escape, for the Mexicans. Their provisions were exhausted; their communications were cut off; their vassals had deserted them; even their gods had betrayed them. They stood alone, with the nations of Anahuac banded against them. There was no hope, but in immediate surrender. He besought the young monarch to take compassion on his brave subjects, who were daily perishing before his eyes; and on the fair city, whose stately buildings were fast crumbling into ruins. "Return to the allegiance," he concludes, "which you once proffered to the sovereign of Castile. The past shall be forgotten. The persons and property, in short, all the rights, of the Aztecs shall be respected. You shall be confirmed in your authority, and Spain will once more take your city under her protection."[14]

The eye of the young monarch kindled, and his dark cheek flushed with sudden anger, as he listened to proposals so humiliating. But, though his bosom glowed with the fiery temper of the Indian, he had the qualities of a "gentle cavalier," says one of his enemies, who knew him well.[15] He did no harm to the envoys; but, after the heat of the moment had passed off, he gave the matter a calm consideration, and called a council of his wise men and warriors to deliberate upon it. Some were for accept-

considered by Captain Diaz, as expressly wrought for this occasion. Ibid., cap. 153.

[13] Ibid., ubi supra.

When dried in the sun, this slimy deposit had a flavor not unlike that of cheese, and formed part of the food of the poorer classes at all times, according to Clavigero. Stor. del Messico, tom. 2, p. 222.

[14] Bernal Diaz, Ibid., cap. 154.

[15] "Mas como el Gautemuz era mancebo, *y muy gentil-hombre* y de buena disposicion." Ibid., loc. cit.

ing the proposals, as offering the only chance of preservation. But the priests took a different view of the matter. They knew that the ruin of their own order must follow the triumph of Christianity. "Peace was good," they said, "but not with the white men." They reminded Guatemozin of the fate of his uncle Montezuma, and the requital he had met with for all his hospitality; of the seizure and imprisonment of Cacama, the cacique of Tezcuco; of the massacre of the nobles by Alvarado; of the insatiable avarice of the invaders, which had stripped the country of its treasures; of their profanation of the temples; of the injuries and insults which they had heaped without measure on the people and their religion. "Better," they said, "to trust in the promises of their own gods, who had so long watched over the nation. Better, if need be, give up our lives at once for our country, than drag them out in slavery and suffering among the false strangers." [16]

The eloquence of the priests, artfully touching the various wrongs of his people, roused the hot blood of Guatemozin. "Since it is so," he abruptly exclaimed, "let us think only of supplying the wants of the people. Let no man, henceforth, who values his life, talk of surrender. We can at least die like warriors." [17]

The Spaniards waited two days for the answer to their embassy. At length, it came in a general sortie of the Mexicans, who, pouring through every gate of the capital, like a river that has burst its banks, swept on, wave upon wave, to the very intrenchments of the besiegers, threatening to overwhelm them by their numbers! Fortunately, the position of the latter on the dikes secured their flanks, and the narrowness of the defile gave their small battery of guns all the advantages of a larger one. The fire of artillery and musketry blazed without intermission along the several causeways, belching forth volumes of sulphurous smoke, that, rolling heavily over the waters, settled dark around the Indian city, and hid it from the surrounding country. The brigantines thundered, at the same time, on the flanks of the columns, which, after some ineffectual efforts to main-

[16] "Mira primero lo que nuestros Dioses te han prometido, toma buen consejo sobre ello y no te fies de Malinche, ni de sus palabras, que mas vale que todos muramos en esta ciudad peleando, que no vernos en poder de quié nos harán esclauos, y nos atormentarán." Ibid., ubi supra.

[17] "Y entonces el Guatemuz medio enojado les dixo: Pues assí quereis que sea, guardad mucho el maiz, y bastimentos que tenemos, y muramos todos peleando: y desde aquí adelante ninguno sea osado á me demandar pazes, si no yo el mataré: y allí todos prometiéron de pelear noches, y dias, y morir en la defensa de su ciudad." Ibid., ubi supra.

tain themselves, rolled back in wild confusion, till their impotent fury died away in sullen murmurs within the capital.

Cortés now steadily pursued the plan he had laid down for the devastation of the city. Day after day the several armies entered by their respective quarters; Sandoval probably directing his operations against the north-eastern district. The buildings, made of the porous *tetzontli*, though generally low, were so massy and extensive, and the canals were so numerous, that their progress was necessarily slow. They, however, gathered fresh accessions of strength every day from the numbers who flocked to the camp from the surrounding country, and who joined in the work of destruction with a hearty good-will, which showed their eagerness to break the detested yoke of the Aztecs. The latter raged with impotent anger, as they beheld their lordly edifices, their temples, all they had been accustomed to venerate, thus ruthlessly swept away; their canals, constructed with so much labor, and what to them seemed science, filled up with rubbish; their flourishing city, in short, turned into a desert, over which the insulting foe now rode triumphant. They heaped many a taunt on the Indian allies. "Go on," they said, bitterly; "the more you destroy, the more you will have to build up again hereafter. If we conquer, you shall build for us; and, if your white friends conquer, they will make you do as much for them."[18] The event justified the prediction.

In their rage they rushed blindly on the corps which covered the Indian pioneers. But they were as often driven back by the impetuous charge of the cavalry, or received on the long pikes of Chinantla, which did good service to the besiegers in their operations. At the close of day, however, when the Spaniards drew off their forces, taking care to send the multitudinous host of confederates first from the ground, the Mexicans usually rallied for a more formidable attack. Then they poured out from every lane and by-way, like so many mountain streams, sweeping over the broad level cleared by the enemy, and falling impetuously on their flanks and rear. At such times, they inflicted considerable loss in their turn, till an ambush, which Cortés laid for them among the buildings adjoining the great temple, did them so much mischief, that they were compelled to act with more reserve.

At times the war displayed something of a chivalrous charac-

[18] "Los de la Ciudad como veian tanto estrago, por esforzarse, decian á nuestros Amigos, que no ficiessen sino quemar, y destruir, que ellos se las harian tornar á hacer de nuevo, porque si ellos eran vencedores, ya ellos sabian, que habia de ser assí, y si no, que las habian de hacer para nosotros." Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 286.

ter, in the personal rencontres of the combatants. Challenges passed between them, and especially between the native warriors. These combats were usually conducted on the *azoteas*, whose broad and level surface afforded a good field of fight. On one occasion, a Mexican of powerful frame, brandishing a sword and buckler, which he had won from the Christians, defied his enemies to meet him in single fight. A young page of Cortés', named Nuñez, obtained his master's permission to accept the vaunting challenge of the Aztec; and, springing on the *azotea*, succeeded after a hard struggle in discomfiting his antagonist, who fought at a disadvantage with weapons in which he was unpractised, and, running him through the body, brought off the spoils in triumph, and laid them at the general's feet.[19]

The division of Cortés had now worked its way as far north as the great street of Tacuba, which opened a communication with Alvarado's camp, and near which stood the palace of Guatemozin. It was a spacious stone pile, that might well be called a fortress. Though deserted by its royal master, it was held by a strong body of Aztecs, who made a temporary defence, but of little avail against the battering enginery of the besiegers. It was soon set on fire, and its crumbling walls were levelled in the dust, like those other stately edifices of the capital, the boast and admiration of the Aztecs, and some of the fairest fruits of their civilization. "It was a sad thing to witness their destruction," exclaims Cortés; "but it was part of our plan of operations, and we had no alternative,"[20]

These operations had consumed several weeks, so that it was now drawing towards the latter part of July. During this time, the blockade had been maintained with the utmost rigor, and the wretched inhabitants were suffering all the extremities of famine. Some few stragglers were taken, from time to time, in the neighborhood of the Christian camp, whither they had wandered in search of food. They were kindly treated by command of Cortés, who was in hopes to induce others to follow their example, and thus to afford a means of conciliating the inhabitants, which might open the way to their submission. But few were found willing to leave the shelter of the capital, and they preferred to take their chance with their suffering countrymen, rather than trust themselves to the mercies of the besiegers.

[19] Ibid., pp. 282–284.—Herrera. Hist. General, dec. 3, lib. 1, cap. 22, lib. 2, cap. 2.—Gomara, Crónica, cap. 140.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 28. Ixtlilxochitl, Venida de los Esp., p. 43.

[20] "No se entendió sino en quemar, y hallanar Casas, que eralástima cierto de lo ver; pero como no nos convenia hacer otra cosa, eramos forzado seguir aquella órden." Ibid. p. 286.

From these few stragglers, however, the Spaniards heard a dismal tale of woe, respecting the crowded population in the interior of the city. All the ordinary means of sustenance had long since failed, and they now supported life as they could, by means of such roots as they could dig from the earth, by gnawing the bark of trees, by feeding on the grass,—on anything, in short, however loathsome, that could allay the craving of appetite. Their only drink was the brackish water of the soil, saturated with the salt lake.[21] Under this unwholesome diet, and the diseases engendered by it, the population was gradually wasting away. Men sickened and died every day, in all the excruciating torments produced by hunger, and the wan and emaciated survivors seemed only to be waiting for their time.

The Spaniards had visible confirmation of all this, as they penetrated deeper into the city and approached the district of Tlatelolco, now occupied by the besieged. They found the ground turned up in quest of roots and weeds, the trees stripped of their green stems, their foliage and their bark. Troops of famished Indians flitted in the distance, gliding like ghosts among the scenes of their former residence. Dead bodies lay unburied in the streets and courtyards, or filled up the canals. It was a sure sign of the extremity of the Aztecs; for they held the burial of the dead as a solemn and imperative duty. In the early part of the siege, they had religiously attended to it. In its later stages, they were still careful to withdraw the dead from the public eye, by bringing their remains within the houses. But the number of these, and their own sufferings, had now so fearfully increased, that they had grown indifferent to this, and they suffered their friends and their kinsmen to lie and moulder on the spot where they drew their last breath![22]

As the invaders entered the dwellings, a more appalling spectacle presented itself;—the floors covered with the prostrate

[21] "No tenian agua dulce para beber, ni para de ninguna manera de comer; bebian del agua salada y hedionda, comian ratones y lagartijas, y cortezas de árboles, y otras cosas no comestibles; y de esta causa enfermáron muchos, y muriéron muchos." Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva Esp., MS., lib. 12, cap. 39—Also Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 289.

[22] "Y es verdad y juro amen, que toda la laguna, y casas, y barbacoas estauan llenas de cuerpos, y cabeças de hombres muertos que yo no sé deque manera lo escriua."(Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 156.) Clavigero considers that it was a scheme of the Mexicans to leave the dead unburied, in order that the stench might annoy and drive off the Spaniards. (Stor. del Messico, tom. III. p. 231, nota. But this policy would have operated much more to the detriment of the besieged than of the besiegers, whose presence in the capital was but transitory. It is much more natural to refer it to the same cause which has led to a similar conduct under similar circumstances elsewhere, whether occasioned by pestilence or famine.

forms of the miserable inmates, some in the agonies of death, others festering in their corruption; men, women, and children, inhaling the poisonous atmosphere, and mingled promiscuously together; mothers, with their infants in their arms perishing of hunger before their eyes, while they were unable to afford them the nourishment of nature; men crippled by their wounds, with their bodies frightfully mangled, vainly attempting to crawl away, as the enemy entered. Yet, even in this state, they scorned to ask for mercy, and glared on the invaders with the sullen ferocity of the wounded tiger, that the huntsmen have tracked to his forest cave. The Spanish commander issued strict orders that mercy should be shown to these poor and disabled victims. But the Indian allies made no distinction. An Aztec, under whatever circumstances, was an enemy; and, with hideous shouts of triumph, they pulled down the burning buildings on their heads, consuming the living and the dead in one common funeral pile!

Yet the sufferings of the Aztecs, terrible as they were, did not incline them to submission. There were many, indeed, who, from greater strength of constitution, or from the more favorable circumstances in which they were placed, still showed all their wonted energy of body and mind, and maintained the same undaunted and resolute demeanor as before. They fiercely rejected all the overtures of Cortés, declaring they would rather die than surrender, and adding, with a bitter tone of exultation, that the invaders would be at least disappointed in their expectations of treasure, for it was buried where they could never find it![23]

The women, it is said, shared in this desperate—it should rather be called heroic—spirit. They were indefatigable in nursing the sick, and dressing their wounds; they aided the warriors in battle, by supplying them with the Indian ammunition of stones and arrows, prepared their slings, strung their bows, and displayed, in short, all the constancy and courage shown by the noble maidens of Saragossa in our day, and by those of Carthage in the days of antiquity.[24]

[23] Gonzalo de las Casas, Defensa, MS., cap. 28.—Martyr, De Orbe Novo, dec. 5, cap. 8.—Iztlilxochitl, Venida de los Esp., p. 45.—Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 289.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 29.

[24] "Muchas cosas acaeciéron en este cerco, que entre otras generacitones estobieran discantadas é tenidas en mucho, en especial de las Mugeres de Temixtitan, de quien ninguna mencion se ha fecho. Y soy certificado, que fué cosa maravillosa y para espantar, verla prontitud y constancia que tobiéron en servir â sus maridos, y en curar los heridos, é en el labrar de las piedras para los que tiraban con hondas, é en otros oficios para mas que mugeres." Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 48.

Cortés had now entered one of the great avenues leading to the market-place of Tlatelolco, the quarter towards which the movements of Alvarado were also directed. A single canal only lay in his way, but this was of great width and stoutly defended by the Mexican archery. At this crisis, the army one evening, while in their entrenchments on the causeway, were surprised by an uncommon light, that arose from the huge *teocalli* in that part of the city, which, being at the north, was the most distant from their own position. This temple, dedicated to the dread war-god, was inferior only to the pyramid in the great square; and on it the Spaniards had more than once seen their unhappy countrymen led to slaughter. They now supposed that the enemy were employed in some of their diabolical ceremonies, when the flame, mounting higher and higher, showed that the sanctuaries themselves were on fire. A shout of exultation at the sight broke forth from the assembled soldiers, as they assured one another that their countrymen under Alvarado had got possession of the building.

It was indeed true. That gallant officer, whose position on the western causeway placed him near the district of Tlatelolco, had obeyed his commander's instructions to the letter, razing every building to the ground in his progress, and filling up the ditches with their ruins. He, at length, found himself before the great *teocalli* in the neighborhood of the market. He ordered a company, under a cavalier named Gutierre de Badajoz, to storm the place, which was defended by a body of warriors, mingled with priests, still more wild and ferocious than the soldiery. The garrison, rushing down the winding terraces, fell on the assailants with such fury, as compelled them to retreat in confusion, and with some loss. Alvarado ordered another detachment to their support. This last was engaged, at the moment, with a body of Aztecs, who hung on its rear as it wound up the galleries of the *teocalli*. Thus hemmed in between two enemies, above and below, the position of the Spaniards was critical. With sword and buckler, they plunged desperately on the ascending Mexicans, and drove them into the courtyard below, where Alvarado plied them with such lively volleys of musketry, as soon threw them into disorder and compelled them to abandon the ground. Being thus rid of annoyance in the rear, the Spaniards returned to the charge. They drove the enemy up the heights of the pyramid, and, reaching the broad summit, a fierce encounter followed in mid-air,—such an encounter as takes place where death is the certain consequence of defeat. It ended, as usual, in the discomfiture of the Aztecs, who were

either slaughtered on the spot still wet with the blood of their own victims, or pitched headlong down the sides of the pyramid.

The area was covered with the various symbols of the barbarous worship of the country, and with two lofty sanctuaries, before whose grinning idols were displayed the heads of several Christian captives, who had been immolated on their altars. Although overgrown by their long, matted hair and bushy beards, the Spaniards could recognize, in the livid countenances, their comrades who had fallen into the hands of the enemy. Tears fell from their eyes, as they gazed on the melancholy spectacle, and thought of the hideous death which their countrymen had suffered. They removed the sad relics with decent care, and after the Conquest deposited them in consecrated ground on a spot since covered by the Church of the Martyrs.[25]

They completed their work by firing the sanctuaries, that the place might be no more polluted by these abominable rites. The flame crept slowly up the lofty pinnacles, in which stone was mingled with wood till, at length, bursting into one bright blaze, it shot up its spiral volume to such a height, that it was seen from the most distant quarters of the Valley. It was this which had been hailed by the soldiery of Cortés, and it served as the beacon-light to both friend and foe, intimating the progress of the Christian arms.

The commander-in-chief and his division, animated by the spectacle, made, in their entrance on the following day, more determined efforts to place themselves alongside of their companions under Alvarado. The broad canal, above noticed as the only impediment now lying in his way, was to be traversed; and on the further side the emaciated figures of the Aztec warriors were gathered in numbers to dispute the passage, like the gloomy shades that wander—as ancient poets tell us—on the banks of the infernal river. They poured down, however, a storm of missiles, which were no shades, on the heads of the Indian laborers, while occupied with filling up the wide gap with the ruins of the surrounding buildings. Still they toiled on in defiance of the arrowy shower, fresh numbers taking the place of those who fell. And when at length the work was completed, the cavalry rode over the rough plain at full charge against the enemy, followed by the deep array of spearmen, who bore down all opposition with their invincible phalanx.

The Spaniards now found themselves on the same ground with Alvarado's division. Soon afterwards, that chief, attended

[25] Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33. cap. 29.—Bernal Diaz. Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 155.—Rel Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, pp. 287-289.

by several of his staff, rode into their lines, and cordially embraced his countrymen and companions in arms, for the first time since the beginning of the siege. They were now in the neighborhood of the market. Cortes, taking with him a few of his cavaliers, galloped into it. It was a vast inclosure, as the reader has already seen, covering many an acre,[26] Its dimensions were suited to the immense multitudes who gathered there from all parts of the Valley in the flourishing days of the Aztec monarchy. It was surrounded by porticos and pavilions for the accommodation of the artisans and traders, who there displayed their various fabrics and articles of merchandise. The flat roofs of the piazzas were now covered with crowds of men and women who gazed in silent dismay on the steel-clad horsemen, that profaned these precincts with their presence, for the first time since their expulsion from the capital. The multitude, composed, for the most part, probably, of unarmed citizens, seemed taken by surprise; at least, they made no show of resistance; and the general, after leisurely viewing the ground, was permitted to ride back unmolested to the army.

On arriving there he ascended the *teocalli*, from which the standard of Castile, supplanting the memorials of Aztec superstition, was now triumphantly floating. The Conqueror, as he strode among the smoking embers on the summit, calmly surveyed the scene of desolation below. The palaces, the temples, the busy marts of industry and trade, the glittering canals, covered with their rich freights from the surrounding country, the royal pomp of groves and gardens, all the splendors of the imperial city, the capital of the Western World, forever gone,—and in their place a barren wilderness! How different the spectacle which the year before had met his eye, as it wandered over the same scenes from the heights of the neighboring *teocalli*, with Montezuma at his side! Seven eighths of the city were laid in ruins, with the occasional exception, perhaps, of some colossal temple, that it would have required too much time to demolish.[27] The remain-

Ante, Vol. II. p. 404.

The *tianguez* still continued of great dimensions, though with faded magnificence, after the Conquest, when it is thus noticed by father Sahagun. "Entráron en la plaza ó Tianguez de este Tlaltilulco (lugar muy espacioso mucho mas de lo que ahora es) el cual se podia llamar emporio de toda esta nueva España: al cual venian á tratar gentes de toda esta nueva España, y aun de los Reinos á ella contiguos, y donde se vendian y compraban todas cuantas cosas hay en toda esta tierra, y en los Reinos de Quahtimalla y Xalisco, (cosa cierto mucho de ver,) yo lo ví por muchos años morando en esta Casa del Señor Santiago, aunque ya no era tanto como antes de la Conquista." Hist. de Nueva Esp., MS., lib. 12, cap. 37.

[27] "E yo miré dende aquella Torre, lo que teniamos ganado de la Ciudad,

ing eighth, comprehending the district of Tlatelolco, was all that now remained to the Aztecs, whose population—still large after all its losses—was crowded into a compass that would hardly have afforded accommodations for a third of their numbers. It was the quarter lying between the great northern and western causeways, and is recognized in the modern capital as the *Barrio de San Jago* and its vicinity. It was the favorite residence of the Indians after the Conquest,[28] though at the present day thinly covered with humble dwellings, forming the straggling suburbs, as it were, of the metropolis. Yet it still affords some faint vestiges of what it was in its prouder days; and the curious antiquary, and occasionally the laborer, as he turns up the soil, encounters a glittering fragment of obsidian, or the mouldering head of a lance, or arrow, or some other warlike relic, attesting that on this spot the retreating Aztecs made their last stand for the independence of their country.[29]

On the day following, Cortes, at the head of his battalions, made a second entry into the great *tianguez*. But this time the Mexicans were better prepared for his coming. They were assembled in considerable force in the spacious square. A sharp encounter followed; but it was short. Their strength was not equal to their spirit, and they melted away before the rolling fire of musketry, and left the Spaniards masters of the enclosure.

The first act was to set fire to some temples of no great size within the market-place, or more probably on its borders. As the flames ascended, the Aztecs, horror-struck, broke forth into piteous lamentations at the destruction of the deities on whom they relied for protection.[30]

The general's next step was at the suggestion of a soldier named Sotelo, a man who had served under the Great Captain in the Italian wars, where he professed to have gathered knowl-

que sin duda de ocho partes teniamos ganado las siete." Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 289.

[28] Toribio, Hist. de los Ind., MS., Parte 3, cap. 7.

The remains of the ancient foundations may still be discerned in this quarter, while in every other *etiam periere ruinæ!*

[29] Bustamante, the Mexican editor of Sahagun, mentions that he has now in his possession several of these military spoils. "Toda la llanura del Santuario de nuestra Señora de los Angeles y de Santiago Tlaltilolco se ve sembrada de fragmentos de lanzas cortantes, de macanas, y flechas de piedra obsidiana, de que usaban los Mexicanos ó sea Chinapos, y yo he recogido no pocos que conservo en mi poder." Hist. de Nueva Esp., lib. 12, nota 21.

[30] "Y como comenzó á arder, levantóse una llama tan alta que parecia llegar al cielo, al espectáculo de esta quema, todos los hombres y mugeres que se habian acogido á las tiendas que cercaban todo el Tianguez comenzaron á llorar á voz en grito, que fué cosa de espanto oirlos; porque quemado aquel delubro satánico luego entendiéron que habian de ser del todo destruidos y robados." Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva Esp., MS., lib. 12, cap. 37.

edge of the science of engineering, as it was then practised. He offered his services to construct a sort of catapult, a machine for discharging stones of great size, which might take the place of the regular battering-train, in demolishing the buildings. As the ammunition, notwithstanding the liberal supplies, which, from time to time, had found their way into the camp, now began to fail, Cortes eagerly acceded to a proposal so well suited to his exigences. Timber and stones were furnished, and a number of hands were employed, under the direction of the self-styled engineer, in constructing the ponderous apparatus, which was erected on a solid platform of masonry, thirty spaces square, and seven or eight feet high, that covered the centre of the market-place. It was the work of the Aztec princes, and was used as a scaffolding, on which mountebanks and jugglers might exhibit their marvellous feats for the amusement of the populace, who took great delight in these performances.[31]

The erection of the machine consumed several days, during which hostilities were suspended, while the artisans were protected from interruption by a strong corps of infantry. At length the work was completed; and the besieged, who, with silent awe, had beheld from the neighboring *azoteas* the progress of the mysterious engine, which was to lay the remainder of their capital in ruins, now looked with terror for its operation. A stone of huge size was deposited on the timber. The machinery was set in motion; and the rocky fragment was discharged with a tremendous force from the catapult. But, instead of taking the direction of the Aztec buildings, it rose high and perpendicularly into the air, and, descending whence it sprung, broke the ill-omened machine into splinters! It was a total failure. The Aztecs were released from their apprehensions, and the soldiery made many a merry jest on the catastrophe, somewhat at the expense of their commander, who testified no little vexation at the disappointment, and still more at his own credulity.[32]

[31] Vestiges of the work are still visible, according to M. de Humboldt, within the limits of the porch of the chapel of St. Jago. Essai Politique, tom. II. p. 44.

[32] Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 155.—Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 290.—Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva España, MS., lib. 12, cap. 37.

CHAPTER VIII.

DREADFUL SUFFERINGS OF THE BESIEGED.—SPIRIT OF GUATEMOZIN.—MURDEROUS ASSAULTS.—CAPTURE OF GUATEMOZIN.—EVACUATION OF THE CITY.—TERMINATION OF THE SIEGE.—REFLECTIONS.

1521.

THERE was no occasion to resort to artificial means to precipitate the ruin of the Aztecs. It was accelerated every hour by causes more potent than those arising from mere human agency. There they were,—pent up in their close and suffocating quarters, nobles, commoners, and slaves, men, women, and children, some in houses, more frequently in hovels,—for this part of the city was not the best,—others in the open air in canoes, or in the streets, shivering in the cold rains of night, and scorched by the burning heat of day.[1] An old chronicler mentions the fact of two women of rank remaining three days and nights up to their necks in the water among the reeds, with only a handful of maize for their support.[2] The ordinary means of sustaining life were long since gone. They wandered about in search of any thing, however unwholesome or revolting, that might mitigate the fierce gnawings of hunger. Some hunted for insects and worms on the borders of the lake, or gathered the salt weeds and moss from its bottom, while at times they might be seen casting a wistful look at the green hills beyond, which many of them had left to share the fate of their brethren in the capital.

To their credit, it is said by the Spanish writers, that they were not driven, in their extremity, to violate the laws of nature by feeding on one another.[3] But unhappily this is contradicted

[1] "Estaban los tristes Mejicanos, hombres y mugeres, niños y niñas, viejos y viejas, heridos y enfermos en un lugar bien estrecho, y been apretados los unos con los otros, y con grandísima falta de bastimentos, y al calor del Sol, y al frio de la noche, y cada hora esperando la muerte." Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva Esp., MS., lib. 12, cap. 39.

[2] Torquemada had the anecdote from a nephew of one of the Indian matrons, then a very old man himself, Monarch, Ind., lib. 4, cap. 102.

[3] Ibid., ubi supra.—Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 156.

by the Indian authorities, who state that many a mother, in her agony, devoured the offspring which she had no longer the means of supporting. This is recorded of more than one siege in history; and it is the more probable here, where the sensibilities must have been blunted by familiarity with the brutal practices of the national superstition.[4]

But all was not sufficient, and hundreds of famished wretches died every day from extremity of suffering. Some dragged themselves into the houses, and drew their last breath alone, and in silence. Others sank down in the public streets. Wherever, they died, there they were left. There was no one to bury, or to remove them. Familiarity with the spectacle made men indifferent to it. They looked on in dumb despair, waiting for their own turn. There was no complaint, no lamentation, but deep, unutterable woe.

If in other quarters of the town the corpses might be seen scattered over the streets, here they were gathered in heaps. "They lay so thick," says Bernal Diaz, "that one could not tread except among the bodies."[5] "A man could not set his foot down," says Cortés, yet more strongly, "unless on the corpse of an Indian!"[6] They were piled one upon another, the living mingled with the dead. They stretched themselves on the bodies of their friends, and lay down to sleep there. Death was everywhere. The city was a vast charnel-house, in which all was hastening to decay and decomposition. A poisonous steam arose from the mass of putrefaction, under the action of alternate rain and heat, which so tainted the whole atmosphere, that the Spaniards, including the general himself, in their brief visits to the quarter, were made ill by it, and it bred a pestilence that swept off even greater numbers than the famine.[7]

[4] "De los niños, no quedó nadie, que las mismas madres y padres los comian (que era gran lástima de ver, y mayormente de sufrir)." (Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva Esp., MS., lib. 12, cap. 39.) The historian derived his accounts from the Mexicans themselves, soon after the event.—One is reminded of the terrible denunciations of Moses: "The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward . . . . . her children which she shall bear; for she shall eat them, for want of all things, secretly, in the siege and straitness wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates." Deuteronomy, chap. 28, vs. 56, 57.

[5] "No podiamos andar sino entre cuerpos, y cabeças de Indios muertos." Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 156.

[6] "No tenian donde estar sino sobre los cuerpos muertos de los suyos." Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, p. 291.

[7] Bernal Diaz, Ibid., ubi supra.—Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 3, lib. 2, cap. 8.—Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva Esp., MS., lib. 12, cap. 41.—Gonzalo de Las Casas, Defensa, MS., cap. 28.

Men's minds were unsettled by these strange and accumulated horrors. They resorted to all the superstitious rites prescribed by their religion, to stay the pestilence. They called on their priests to invoke the gods in their behalf. But the oracles were dumb, or gave only gloomy responses. Their deities had deserted them, and in their place they saw signs of celestial wrath, telling of still greater woes in reserve. Many, after the siege, declared, that, among other prodigies, they beheld a stream of light, of a blood-red color, coming from the north in the direction of Tepejacac, with a rushing noise, like that of a whirlwind, which swept round the district of Tlatelolco, darting out sparkles and flakes of fire, till it shot far into the centre of the lake![8] In the disordered state of their nerves, a mysterious fear took possession of their senses. Prodigies were of familiar occurrence, and the most familiar phenomena of nature were converted into prodigies.[9] Stunned by their calamities, reason was bewildered, and they became the sport of the wildest and most superstitious fancies.

In the midst of these awful scenes, the young emperor of the Aztecs remained, according to all accounts, calm and courageous. With his fair capital laid in ruins before his eyes, his nobles and faithful subjects dying around him, his territory rent away, foot by foot, till scarce enough remained for him to stand on, he rejected every invitation to capitulate, and showed the same indomitable spirit, as at the commencement of the siege. When Cortés, in the hope that the extremities of the besieged would incline them to listen to an accommodation, persuaded a noble prisoner to bear to Guatemozin his proposals to that effect; the fierce young monarch, according to the general, ordered him at once to be sacrificed.[10] It is a Spaniard, we must remember, who tells the story.

Cortés, who had suspended hostilities for a few days, in the vain hope that the distresses of the Mexicans would bend them to submission, now determined to drive them to it by a general

[8] "Un torbellino de fuego como sangre embuelto en brasas y en centellas, que partia de hacia Tepeacac (que es donde está ahora Santa María de Guadalupe) y fué haciendo gran ruido, hacia donde estaban acorralados los Mejicanos y Tlaltilulcanos; y dió una vuelta para enrededor de ellos, y no dicen si los empeció algo, sino que habiendo dado aquella vuelta, se entró por la laguna adelante; y allí desapareció." Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva Esp., MS., lib. 12, cap. 40.

[9] "Inclinatis ad credendum animis," says the philosophic Roman historian, "loco ominum etiam fortuita." Tacitus, Hist., lib. 2, sec. 1.

[10] "Y como lo llevâron delante de Guatimucin su Señor, y él le comenzó á hablar sobre la Paz, disque luego lo mandó matar y sacrificar." Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, p. 293.

assault. Cooped up, as they were, within a narrow quarter of the city, their position favored such an attempt, He commanded Alvarado to hold himself in readiness, and directed Sandoval—who, besides the causeway, had charge of the fleet, which lay off the Tlatelolcan district—to support the attack by a cannonade on the houses near the water. He then led his forces into the city, or rather across the horrid waste that now encircled it.

On entering the Indian precincts, he was met by several of the chiefs, who, stretching forth their emaciated arms, exclaimed, "You are the children of the Sun. But the Sun is swift in his course. Why are you, then, so tardy? Why do you delay so long to put an end to our miseries? Rather kill us at once, that we may go to our god Huitzilopochtli, who waits for us in heaven to give us rest from our sufferings!" [11]

Cortés was moved by their piteous appeal, and answered, that he desired not their death, but their submission. "Why does your master refuse to treat with me," he said, "when a single hour will suffice for me to crush him and all his people?" He then urged them to request Guatemozin to confer with him, with the assurance that he might do it in safety, as his person should not be molested.

The nobles, after some persuasion, undertook the mission; and it was received by the young monarch in a manner which showed—if the anecdote before related of him be true—that misfortune had, at length, asserted some power over his haughty spirit. He consented to the interview, though not to have it take place on that day, but the following, in the great square of Tlatelolco. Cortés, well satisfied, immediately withdrew from the city, and resumed his position on the causeway.

The next morning he presented himself at the place appointed, having previously stationed Alvarado there with a strong corps of infantry, to guard against treachery. The stone platform in the centre of the square was covered with mats and carpets, and a banquet was prepared to refresh the famished monarch and his nobles. Having made these arrangements, he awaited the hour of the interview.

But Guatemozin, instead of appearing himself, sent his nobles, the same who had brought to him the general's invitation, and who now excused their master's absence on the plea of illness. Cortés, though disappointed, gave a courteous reception to the

[11] "Que pues ellos me tenian por Hijo del Sol, y el Sol en tanta brevadad como era en un dia y una noche daba vuelta á todo el Mundo, que porque yo assí brevemente no los acababa de matar, y los quitaba de penar tanto, porque ya ellos tenian deseos de morir, y irse al Cielo para su Ochilobus, [Huitzilopochtli,] que los estaba esperando para descansar." Ibid., p. 292.

envoys, considering that it might still afford the means of opening a communication with the emperor. He persuaded them, without much entreaty, to partake of the good cheer spread before them, which they did with a voracity that told how severe had been their abstinence. He then dismissed them with a seasonable supply of provisions for their master, pressing him to consent to an interview, without which it was impossible their differences could be adjusted.

The Indian envoys returned in a short time, bearing with them a present of fine cotton fabrics, of no great value, from Guatemozin, who still declined to meet the Spanish general. Cortés, though deeply chagrined, was unwilling to give up the point. "He will surely come," he said to the envoys, "when he sees that I suffer you to go and come unharmed, you who have been my steady enemies, no less than himself, throughout the war. He has nothing to fear from me."[12] He again parted with them, promising to receive their answer the following day.

On the next morning, the Aztec chiefs, entering the Christian quarters, announced to Cortés that Guatemozin would confer with him at noon in the market-place. The general was punctual at the hour; but without success. Neither monarch, nor ministers appeared there. It was plain that the Indian prince did not care to trust the promises of his enemy. A thought of Montezuma may have passed across his mind. After he had waited three hours the general's patience was exhausted, and, as he learned that the Mexicans were busy in preparations for defence, he made immediate dispositions for the assault.[13]

The confederates had been left without the walls, for he did not care to bring them in sight of the quarry, before he was ready to slip the leash. He now ordered them to join him; and supported by Alvarado's division, marched at once into the enemy's quarters. He found them prepared to receive him. Their most able-bodied warriors were thrown into the van, covering their feeble and crippled comrades. Women were seen occa-

[12] "Y yo les torné á repetir, que no sabia la causa, porque él se recelaba venir ante mí, pues veia que á ellos, que yo sabia q̃ habian sido los causadores principales de la Guerra, y que la habian sustentado, les hacia buen tratamiento, que los dejaba ir, y venir seguramente, sin recibir enojo alguno; que les rogaba, que le tornassen á hablar, y mirassen mucho en esto de su venida, pues á él le convenia, y yo lo hacia por su provecho." Ibid., pp. 294, 295.

[13] The testimony is most emphatic and unequivocal to these repeated efforts on the part of Cortés to bring the Aztecs peaceably to terms. Besides his own Letter to the Emperor, see Bernal Diaz, cap. 155,—Herrera, Hist. General, lib. 2, cap. 6, 7,—Torquemada, Monarch. Ind., lib. 4, cap. 100,—Ixtlilxochitl, Venida de los Esp., pp. 44-48,—Oviedo Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 29, 30.

sionally mingling in the ranks, and, as well as children, thronged the *azoteas*, where, with famine-stricken visages, and haggard eyes, they scowled defiance and hatred on their invaders.

As the Spaniards advanced, the Mexicans set up a fierce war cry, and sent off clouds of arrows with their accustomed spirit, while the women and boys rained down darts and stones from their elevated position on the terraces. But the missiles were sent by hands too feeble to do much damage; and, when the squadrons closed, the loss of strength became still more sensible in the Aztecs. Their blows fell feebly and with doubtful aim, though some, it is true, of stronger constitution, or gathering strength from despair, maintained to the last a desperate fight.

The arquebusiers now poured in a deadly fire. The brigantines replied by successive volleys, in the opposite quarter. The besieged, hemmed in, like deer surrounded by the huntsmen, were brought down on every side. The carnage was horrible. The ground was heaped up with slain, until the maddened combatants were obliged to climb over the human mounds to get a one another. The miry soil was saturated with blood, which ran off like water, and dyed the canals themselves with crimson.[14] All was uproar and terrible confusion. The hideous yells of the barbarians; the oaths and execrations of the Spaniards; the cries of the wounded; the shrieks of women and children; the heavy blows of the Conquerors; the death-struggle of their victims; the rapid, reverberating echoes of musketry; the hissing of innumerable missiles; the crash and crackling of blazing buildings, crushing hundreds in their ruins; the blinding volumes of dust and sulphurous smoke shrouding all in their gloomy canopy,—made a scene appalling even to the soldiers of Cortés, steeled as they were by many a rough passage of war, and by long familiarity with blood and violence. "The piteous cries of the women and children, in particular," says the general, "were enough to break one's heart."[15] He commanded that they should be spared and that all, who asked it, should receive quarter. He particularly urged this on the confederates, and placed men among them to restrain their violence.[16] But he

[14] "Corrian Arroios de Sangre por las Calles, como pueden correr de Agua, quando llueve y con ímpetu, y fuerça." Torquemada, Monarch, Ind., lib. 4, cap. 103.

[15] "Era tanta la grita, y lloro de los Niños, y Mugeres, que no habia Persona, á quien no quebrantasse el corazon." (Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, p. 296.) They were a rash and stiff-necked race, exclaims his reverend editor, the archbishop, with a charitable commentary! "*Gens durae cervicis gens absque consilio.*" Nota.

[16] "Como la gente de la Cibdad se salia á los nuestros, habia el general proveido, que por todas las calles estubiesen Españoles para estorvar á los

had set an engine in motion too terrible to be controlled. It were as easy to curb the hurricane in its fury, as the passions of an infuriated horde of savages. "Never did I see so pitiless a race," he exclaims, "or any thing wearing the form of man so destitute of humanity."[17] They made no distinction of sex or age, and in this hour of vengeance seemed to be requiting the hoarded wrongs of a century. At length, sated with slaughter, the Spanish commander sounded a retreat. It was full time, if according to his own statement,—we may hope it is an exaggeration,—forty thousand souls had perished![18] Yet their fate was to be envied, in comparison with that of those who survived.

Through the long night which followed, no movement was perceptible in the Aztec quarter. No light was seen there, no sound was heard, save the low moaning of some wounded or dying wretch, writhing in his agony. All was dark and silent,—the darkness of the grave. The last blow seemed to have completely stunned them. They had parted with hope, and sat in sullen despair, like men waiting in silence the stroke of the executioner. Yet, for all this, they showed no disposition to submit. Every new injury had sunk deeper into their souls, and filled them with a deeper hatred of their enemy. Fortune, friends, kindred, home,—all were gone. They were content to throw away life itself, now that they had nothing more to live for.

Far different was the scene in the Christian camp, where, elated with their recent successes, all was alive with bustle, and preparation for the morrow. Bonfires were seen blazing along the causeways, lights gleamed from tents and barracks, and the sounds of music and merriment, borne over the waters, proclaimed the joy of the soldiers, at the prospect of so soon terminating their wearisome campaign.

On the following morning the Spanish commander again mustered his forces, having decided to follow up the blow of the preceding day, before the enemy should have time to rally, and, at once, to put an end to the war. He had arranged with Alvarado, on the evening previous, to occupy the market-place of Tlatelolco; and the discharge of an arquebuse was to be the signal for a simultaneous assault. Sandoval was to hold the

amigos, que no matasen aquellos tristes, que eran sin número. E tambien dixo á todos los amigos capitanes, que no consintiesen á su gente que matasen á ninguno de los que salian. Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 30.

[17] "La qual crueldad nunca en Generacion tan recia se vió, ni tan fuera de toda órden de naturaleza, como en los Naturales de estas partes." Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 296.

[18] Ibid,, ubi supra.—Ixtlilxochitl says, 50,000 were slain and taken in this readful onslaught. Venida de los Esp., p. 48.

northern causeway, and, with the fleet, to watch the movements of the Indian emperor, and to intercept the flight to the main land, which Cortés knew he meditated. To allow him to effect this would be to leave a formidable enemy in his own neighbor hood, who might at any time kindle the flame of insurrection throughout the country. He ordered Sandoval, however, to do no harm to the royal person, and not to fire on the enemy at all, except in self-defence.[19]

It was the memorable 13th of August, 1521, the day of St. Hypolito,—from this circumstance selected as the patron saint of modern Mexico,—that Cortés led his warlike array for the last time across the black and blasted environs which lay around the Indian capital. On entering the Aztec precincts he paused, willing to afford its wretched inmates one more chance of escape, before striking the fatal blow. He obtained an interview with some of the principal chiefs, and expostulated with them on the conduct of their prince. "He surely will not," said the general, "see you all perish, when he can so easily save you." He then urged them to prevail on Guatemozin to hold a conference with him, repeating the assurances of his personal safety.

The messengers went on their mission, and soon returned with the *cihuacoatl* at their head, a magistrate of high authority among the Mexicans. He said, with a melancholy air, in which his own disappointment was visible, that "Guatemozin was ready to die where he was, but would hold no interview with the Spanish commander"; adding, in a tone of resignation, "it is for you to work your pleasure." "Go then," replied the stern Conqueror "and prepare your countrymen for death. Their hour is come."[20]

He still postponed the assault for several hours. But the impatience of his troops at this delay was heightened by the rumor, that Guatemozin and his nobles were preparing to escape with their effects in the *piraguas* and canoes which were moored on the margin of the lake. Convinced of the fruitlessness and impolicy of further procrastination, Cortés made his final disposi-

[19] "Adonde estauan retraidos el Guatemuz con toda la flor de sus Capitanes, y personas mas nobles que en México auia, y le mandó que no matasse, ni hiriesse á ningunos Indios, saluo si no le diessen, guerra, é que aunque se la diessen, que solemente se defendiesse." Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 156.

[20] "Y al fin me dijo, que en ninguna manera el Señor vernia ante mí; y antes queria por allá morir, y que á él pesaba mucho de esto, que hiciesse yo lo que quisiesse; y como ví en esto su determinacion, yo le dije; que se bolviesse á los suyos, y que él, y ellos se apparejassen, porque los queria combatir, y acabar de matar, y assí se fué." Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 298.

tions for the attack, and took his own station on an *azotea*, which commanded the theatre of operations.

When the assailants came into presence of the enemy, they found them huddled together in the utmost confusion, all ages and sexes, in masses so dense that they nearly forced one another over the brink of the causeways into the water below. Some had climbed on the terraces, others feebly supported themselves against the walls of the buildings. Their squalid and tattered garments gave a wildness to their appearance, which still further heightened the ferocity of their expression, as they glared on their enemy with eyes in which hate was mingled with despair. When the Spaniards had approached within bowshot, the Aztecs let off a flight of impotent missiles, showing, to the last, the resolute spirit, though they had lost the strength, of their better days. The fatal signal was then given by the discharge of an arquebuse,—speedily followed by peals of heavy ordnance, the rattle of fire-arms, and the hellish shouts of the confederates, as they sprang upon their victims. It is unnecessary to stain the page with a repetition of the horrors of the preceding day. Some of the wretched Aztecs threw themselves into the water, and were picked up by the canoes. Others sunk and were suffocated in the canals. The number of these became so great, that a bridge was made of their dead bodies, over which the assailants could climb to the opposite banks. Others again, especially the women, begged for mercy, which, as the chroniclers assure us, was everywhere granted by the Spaniards, and contrary to the instructions and entreaties of Cortés, everywhere refused by the confederates.[21]

While this work of butchery was going on, numbers were observed pushing off in the barks that lined the shore, and making the best of their way across the lake. They were constantly intercepted by the brigantines, which broke through the flimsy array of boats; sending off their volleys to the right and left, as the crews of the latter hotly assailed them. The battle raged as fiercely on the lake as on the land. Many of the Indian vessels were shattered and overturned. Some few, however, under cover of the smoke, which rolled darkly over the waters, succeeded in clearing themselves of the turmoil, and were fast nearing the opposite shore.

Sandoval had particularly charged his captains to keep an eye on the movements of any vessel in which it was at all probable that Guatemozin might be concealed. At this crisis, three or

[21] Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 30.—Ixtlilxochitl, Venida de los Esp., p. 48.—Herrera, Hist General, dec. 3, lib. 2, cap. 7.—Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, pp. 297, 298.—Gomara, Crónica, cap. 142.

four of the largest *piraguas* were seen skimming over the water, and making their way rapidly across the lake. A captain, named Garci Holguin, who had command of one of the best sailers in the fleet, instantly gave them chase. The wind was favorable, and, every moment, he gained on the fugitives, who pulled their oars with a vigor that despair alone could have given. But it was in vain; and, after a short race, Holguin, coming alongside of one of the *piraguas*, which, whether from its appearance, or from information he had received, he conjectured might bear the Indian emperor, ordered his men to level their crossbows at the boat. But, before they could discharge them, a cry arose from those in it, that their lord was on board. At the same moment, a young warrior, armed with buckler and *maquahuitl*, rose up, as if to beat off the assailants. But, as the Spanish captain ordered his men not to shoot, he dropped his weapons, and exclaimed, "I am Guatemozin; lead me to Malinche, I am his prisoner; but let no harm come to my wife and my followers." [22]

Holguin assured him, that his wishes should be respected, and assisted him to get on board the brigantine, followed by his wife and attendants. These were twenty in number, consisting of Coanaco, the deposed lord of Tezcuco, the lord of Tlacopan, and several other caciques and dignitaries, whose rank, probably, had secured them some exemption from the general calamities of the siege. When the captives were seated on the deck of his vessel, Holguin requested the Aztec prince to put an end to the combat by commanding his people in the other canoes to surrender. But, with a dejected air, he replied, "It is not necessary. They will fight no longer, when they see that their prince is taken." He spoke truth. The news of Guatemozin's capture spread rapidly through the fleet, and on shore, where the Mexicans were still engaged in conflict with their enemies. It ceased, however, at once. They made no further resistance; and those on the water quickly followed the brigantines, which conveyed their captive monarch to land. It seemed as if the fight had been maintained thus long, the better to divert the enemy's attention, and cover their master's retreat.[23]

[22] Ixtlilxochitl, Venida de los Esp., p. 49.

"No me tiren, que yo soy el Rey de México, y desta tierra, y lo que te, ruego es, que no me llegues á mi munger, ni ámis hijos; ni á ninguna muger, ni á ninguna cosa de lo que aquí traygo, sino que me tomes á mí, y me lleues á Malinche." (Bernal Diaz Hist de la Conquista, cap, 156.) M. de Humboldt has taken much pains to identify the place of Guatemozin's capture,—now becoming dry land,—which he considers to have been somewhere between the Garita del Peralvillo, the square of St. Iago de Tlaltelolco, and the bridge of Amaxac. Essai Politique, tom. II. p. 76.

[23] For the preceeding account of the capture of Guatemozin, told with

Meanwhile Sandoval, on receiving tidings of the capture, brought his own brigantine alongside of Holguin's, and demanded the royal prisoner to be surrendered to him. But his captain claimed him as his prize. A dispute arose between the parties, each anxious to have the glory of the deed, and perhaps the privilege of commemorating it on his escutcheon. The controversy continued so long that it reached the ears of Cortés, who, in his station on the *azotea*, had learned, with no little satisfaction, the capture of his enemy. He instantly sent orders to his wrangling officers, to bring Guatemozin before him, that he might adjust the difference between them.[24] He charged them, at the same time, to treat their prisoner with respect. He then made preparations for the interview; caused the terrace to be carpeted with crimson cloth and matting, and a table to be spread with provisions, of which the unhappy Aztecs stood so much in need.[25] His lovely Indian mistress, Doña Marina, was present to act as interpreter. She had stood by his side through all the troubled scenes of the Conquest, and she was there now to witness its triumphant termination.

Guatemozin, on landing, was escorted by a company of infantry to the presence of the Spanish commander. He mounted the *azotea* with a calm and steady step, and was easily to be distinguished from his attendant nobles, though his full, dark eye was no longer lighted up with its accustomed fire, and his features wore an expression of passive resignation, that told little of the fierce and fiery spirit that burned within. His head was large, his limbs well proportioned, his complexion fairer than those of his bronze-colored nation, and his whole deportment singularly mild and engaging.[26]

little discrepancy, though with more or less minuteness by the different writers, see Bernal Diaz, Ibid., ubi supra,—Rel. Terc. de Cortés, p. 299,—Gonzalo de las Casas, Defensa, MS.,—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 30,—Torquemada, Monarch., Ind., lib. 4, cap. 101.

[24] The general, according to Diaz, rebuked his officers for their ill-timed contention, reminding them of the direful effects of a similar quarrel between Marius and Sylla, respecting Jugurtha. (Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 156.) This piece of pedantry savors much more of the old chronicler than his commander. The result of the whole—not an uncommon one in such cases—was, that the Emperor granted to neither of the parties, but to Cortes, the exclusive right of commemorating the capture of Guatemozin, by placing his head, together with the heads of seven other captive princes, on the border of his shield.

[25] Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva Esp., lib. 12, cap. 40, MS.

[26] For the portrait of Guatemozin, I again borrow the faithful pencil of Diaz, who knew him— at least his person—well. "Guatemuz era de muy gentil disposicion, assí de cuerpo, como de fayciones, y la cata algo larga, y alegre, y los ojos mas parecian que quando miraua, que eran con grauedad, y halagüeños, y no auia falta en ellos, y era de edad de veinte y tres, ó veinte

Cortés came forward with a dignified and studied courtesy to receive him. The Aztec monarch probably knew the person of his conqueror, for he first broke silence by saying; "I have done all that I could, to defend myself and my people. I am now reduced to this state. You will deal with me, Malinche, as you list." Then, laying his hand on the hilt of a poniard, stuck in the general's belt, he added, with vehemence, "Better despatch me with this, and rid me of life at once." [27] Cortés was filled with admiration at the proud bearing of the young barbarian, showing in his reverses a spirit worthy of an ancient Roman. "Fear not," he replied, "you shall be treated with all honor. You have defended your capital like a brave warrior. A Spaniard knows how to respect valor even in an enemy." [28] He then inquired of him, where he had left the princess, his wife; and, being informed that she still remained under protection of a Spanish guard on board the brigantine, the general sent to have her escorted to his presence.

She was the youngest daughter of Montezuma; and was hardly yet on the verge of womanhood. On the accession of her cousin, Guatemozin, to the throne, she had been wedded to him as his lawful wife.[29] She is celebrated by her contemporaries for her personal charms; and the beautiful princess, Tecuichpo, is still commemorated by the Spaniards, since from her, by a subsequent marriage, are descended some of the illustrious families of their own nation.[30] She was kindly received by Cortés, who showed her the respectful attentions suited to her rank. Her birth, no doubt, gave her an additional interest in

y quatro años, y el color tiraua mas á blanco, que al color, y matiz de essotros Indios morenos." Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 156.

[27] "Llegóse á mi, y díjome en su lengua: que ya él habia hecho todo, lo que de su parte era obligado para defenderse á sí, y á los suyos, hasta venir en a quel estado; que ahora ficiesse de él lo que yo quisiesse; y puso la mano en un puñal, que yo tenia, diciéndome, que le diesse de puñaladas, y le matasse." (Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 300.) This remarkable account by the Conqueror himself is confirmed by Diaz, who does not appear to have seen this letter of his commander. Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 156.

[28] Ibid., cap. 156.—Also Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 48, —and Martyr, (De Orbe Novo, dec 5, cap. 8,) who, by the epithet of *magnanimo regi*, testifies the admiration which Guatemozin's lofty spirit excited in the court of Castile.

[29] The ceremony of marriage, which distinguished the "lawful wife" from the concubine, is described by Don Thoan Cano, in his conversation with Oviedo. According to this, it appears that the only legitimate offspring which Montezuma left at his death, was a son and a daughter, this same princess.—See *Appendix*, *Part* 2, *No.* 11.

[30] For a further account of Montezuma's daughter, see Book VII., Chapter III. of this History.

his eyes, and he may have felt some touch of compunction, as he gazed on the daughter of the unfortunate Montezuma. He invited his royal captives to partake of the refreshments, which their exhausted condition rendered so necessary. Meanwhile the Spanish commander made his dispositions for the night, ordering Sandoval to escort the prisoners to Cojohuacan, whither he proposed, himself immediately to follow. The other captains, Olid and Alvarado, were to draw off their forces to their respective quarters. It was impossible for them to continue in the capital, where the poisonous effluvia from the unburied carcasses loaded the air with infection. A small guard only was stationed to keep order in the wasted suburbs.—It was the hour of vespers when Guatemozin surrendered,[31] and the siege might be considered as then concluded. The evening set in dark, and the rain began to fall, before the several parties had evacuated the city.[32]

During the night, a tremendous tempest, such as the Spaniards had rarely witnessed, and such as is known only within the tropics, burst over the Mexican Valley. The thunder, reverberating from the rocky amphitheatre of hills, bellowed over the waste of waters, and shook the *teocallis* and crazy tenements of Tenochtitlan—the few that yet survived—to their foundations. The lightning seemed to cleave asunder the vault of heaven, as its vivid flashes wrapped the whole scene in a ghastly glare, for a moment, to be again swallowed up in darkness. The war of elements was in unison with the fortunes of the

[31] The event is annually commemorated, or rather was, under the colonial government, by a solemn procession round the walls of the city. It took place on the 13th of August, the anniversary of the surrender, and consisted of the principal cavaliers and citizens on horseback, headed by the viceroy, and displaying the venerable standard of the Conqueror.

[32] Toribio, Hist. de los Ind., MS., Parte 3, cap. 7.—Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva Esp., MS., lib. 12, cap. 42.—Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 156.

"The lord of Mexico having surrendered," says Cortés, in his letter to the Emperor, "the war, by the blessing of Heaven, was brought to an end, on Wednesday, the 13th day of August, 1521. So that from the day when we first sat down before the city, which was the 30th of May, until its final occupation, seventy-five days elapsed." (Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, p. 300.) It is not easy to tell what event occurred on May 30th, to designate the beginning of the siege. Clavigero considers it the occupation of Cojohuacan by Olid, (Stor. del Messico, tom. III. p. 196.) But I know not on what authority. Neither Bernal Diaz, nor Herrera, nor Cortés, so fixes the date. Indeed, Clavigero says, that Alvarado and Olid left Tezcuco May 20, while Cortés says May 10. Perhaps Cortés dates from the time when Sandoval established himself on the northern causeway, and when the complete investment of the capital began.—Bernal Diaz, more than once, speaks of the siege as lasting three months, computing, probably, from the time when his own division, under Alvarado, took up its position at Tacuba.

ruined city. It seemed as if the deities of Anahuac, scared from their ancient abodes, were borne along shrieking and howling in the blast, as they abandoned the fallen capital to its fate![33]

On the day following the surrender, Guatemozin requested the Spanish commander to allow the Mexicans to leave the city, and to pass unmolested into the open country. To this Cortés readily assented, as, indeed, without it he could take no steps for purifying the capital. He gave his orders, accordingly, for the evacuation of the place, commanding that no one, Spaniard or confederate, should offer violence to the Aztecs, or in any way obstruct their departure. The whole number of these is variously estimated at from thirty to seventy thousand, beside women and children, who had survived the sword, pestilence, and famine.[34] It is certain they were three days in defiling along the several causeways,—a mournful train ;[35] husbands and wives, parents and children, the sick and the wounded, leaning on one another for support, as they feebly tottered along, squalid, and but half covered with rags, that disclosed at every step hideous gashes, some recently received, others festering from long neglect, and carrying with them an atmosphere of contagion. Their wasted forms and famine-stricken faces told the whole history of the siege ; and, as the straggling files gained the opposite shore they were observed to pause from time to time, as if to take one more look at the spot so lately crowned by the imperial city, once their pleasant home, and endeared to them by many a glorious recollection.

On the departure of the inhabitants, measures were immediately taken to purify the place, by means of numerous fires kept burning day and night, especially in the infected quarter of Tlatelolco, and by collecting the heaps of dead, which lay mouldering in the streets, and consigning them to the earth.—Of the whole number, who perished in the course of the siege,

[33] It did not, apparently, disturb the slumbers of the troops who had been so much deafened by the incessant noises of the siege, that, now these had ceased, "we felt," says Diaz, in his homely way, "like men suddenly escaped from a belfry, where we had been shut up for months with a chime of bells ringing in our ears!" Ibid., ubi supra.

[34] Herrera (Hist. General, dec. 3, lib. 2, cap. 7) and Torquemada (Monarch. Ind., lib. 4, cap. 101) estimate them at 30,000. Ixtlilxochitl says, that 60,000 fighting men laid down their arms ; (Venida de los Esp. p. 49 ;) and Oviedo swells the amount still higher, to 70,000. (Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 48.)—After the losses of the siege, these numbers are startling.

[35] "Digo que en tres dias con sus noches iban todas tres calçadas llenas de Indios, é Indias, y muchachos, llenas de bote en bote, que nunca dexauan de salir, y tan flacos, y suzios, é amarillos, é hediondos, que era lástima de los ver." Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 156.

it is impossible to form any probable computation. The accounts range widely from one hundred and twenty thousand, the lowest estimate, to two hundred and forty thousand.[36] The number of the Spaniards who fell was comparatively small, but that of the allies must have been large, if the historian of Tezcuco is correct in asserting, that thirty thousand perished of his own countrymen alone.[37] That the number of those destroyed within the city was immense cannot be doubted, when we consider, that, besides, its own redundant population, it was thronged with that of the neighboring towns, who, distrusting their strength to resist the enemy, sought protection within its walls.

The booty found there—that is, the treasures of gold and jewels, the only booty of much value in the eyes of the Spaniards—fell far below their expectations. It did not exceed, according to the general's statement, a hundred and thirty thousand *castellanos* of gold, including the sovereign's share, which, indeed, taking into account many articles of curious and costly workmanship, voluntarily relinquished by the army, greatly exceeded his legitimate fifth.[38] Yet the Aztecs must have been in possession of a much larger treasure, if it were only the wreck of that recovered from the Spaniards on the night of the memorable flight from Mexico. Some of the spoil may have been sent away from the capital; some spent in preparations for defence, and more of it buried in the earth, or sunk in the

[36] Cortés estimates the losses of the enemy in the three several assaults at 67,000, which, with 50,000, whom he reckons to have perished from famine and disease, would give 117,000. (Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, p. 298, et alibi.) But this is exclusive of those who fell previously to the commencement of the vigorous plan of operations for demolishing the city. Ixtlilxochitl, who seldom allows any one to beat him in figures, puts the dead, in round numbers, at 240,000, comprehending the flower of the Aztec nobility. (Venida, de los Esp., p. 51.) Bernal Diaz observes, more generally, "I have read the story of the destruction of Jerusalem, but I doubt if there was as great mortality there as in this siege; for there was assembled in the city an immense number of Indian warriors from all the provinces and towns subject to Mexico, the most of whom perished." (Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 156.) "I have conversed," says Oviedo, "with many hidalgos and other persons, and have heard them say that the number of the dead was incalculable.—greater than that at Jerusalem, as described by Josephus." (Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 30, cap. 30.) As the estimate of the Jewish historian amounts to 1,100,000, (Antiquities of the Jews, Eng. tr., Book VII. chap. XVII.,) the comparison may stagger the most accommodating faith. It will be safer to dispense with arithmetic, where the data are too loose and slippery to afford a foothold for getting at truth.

[37] Ibid., ubi supra.

[38] Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, p. 301.

Oviedo goes into some further particulars respecting the amount of the treasure, and especially of the imperial fifth, to which I shall have occasion to advert hereafter. Hist de las Ind., MS., 33, cap. 31.

water of the lake. Their menaces were not without a meaning. They had, at least, the satisfaction of disappointing the avarice of their enemies.

Cortés had no further occasion for the presence of his Indian allies. He assembled the chiefs of the different squadrons, thanked them for their services, noticed their valor in flattering terms, and, after distributing presents among them, with the assurance that his master, the Emperor, would recompense their fidelity yet more largely, dismissed them to their own homes. They carried off a liberal share of the spoils, of which they had plundered the dwellings,—not of a kind to excite the cupidity of the Spaniards,—and returned in triumph, short-sighted triumph! at the success of their expedition, and the downfall of the Aztec dynasty.

Great, also, was the satisfaction of the Spaniards at this brilliant termination of their long and laborious campaign. They were, indeed, disappointed at the small amount of treasure found in the conquered city. But the soldier is usually too much absorbed in the present to give much heed to the future; and, though their discontent showed itself afterwards in a more clamorous form, they now thought only of their triumph, and abandoned themselves to jubilee. Cortés celebrated the event by a banquet, as sumptuous as circumstances would permit, to which all the cavaliers and officers were invited. Loud and long was their revelry, which was carried to such an excess, as provoked the animadversion of father Olmedo, who intimated that this was not the fitting way to testify their sense of the favors shown them by the Almighty. Cortés admitted the justice of the rebuke, but craved some indulgence for a soldier's license in the hour of victory. The following day was appointed for the commemoration of their successes in a more suitable manner.

A procession of the whole army was then formed with father Olmedo at its head. The soiled and tattered banners of Castile, which had waved over many a field of battle, now threw their shadows on the peaceful array of the soldiery, as they slowly moved along, rehearsing the litany, and displaying the image of the Virgin and the blessed symbol of man's redemption. The reverend father pronounced a discourse, in which he briefly reminded the troops of their great cause for thankfulness to Providence for conducting them safe through their long and perilous pilgrimage; and, dwelling on the responsibility incurred by their present position, he besought them not to abuse the rights of conquest, but to treat the unfortunate Indians with humanity. The sacrament was then administered to the com-

mander-in-chief and the principal cavaliers, and the services concluded with a solemn thanksgiving to the God of battles, who had enabled them to carry the banner of the Cross triumphant over this barbaric empire.[39]

Thus, after a siege of nearly three months' duration, unmatched in history for the constancy and courage of the besieged, seldom surpassed for the severity of its sufferings, fell the renowned capital of the Aztecs. Unmatched, it may be truly said for constancy and courage, when we recollect that the door of capitulation on the most honorable terms was left open to them throughout the whole blockade, and that, sternly rejecting every proposal of their enemy, they, to a man, preferred to die rather than surrender. More than three centuries had elapsed, since the Aztecs, a poor and wandering tribe from the far North-west had come on the plateau. There they built their miserable collection of huts on the spot—as tradition tells us—prescribed by the oracle. Their conquests, at first confined to their immediate neighborhood, gradually covered the Valley, then crossing the mountains, swept over the broad extent of the table-land, descended its precipitous sides, and rolled onwards to the Mexican Gulf, and the distant confines of Central America. Their wretched capital, meanwhile, keeping pace with the enlargement of territory, had grown into a flourishing city, filled with buildings, monuments of art, and a numerous population, that gave it the first rank among the capitals of the Western World. At this crisis, came over another race from the remote East, strangers like themselves, whose coming had also been predicted by the oracle, and, appearing on the plateau, assailed them in the very zenith of their prosperity, and blotted them out from the map of nations forever! The whole story has the air of fable, rather than of history! a legend of romance,—a tale of the genii!

Yet we cannot regret the fall of an empire, which did so little to promote the happiness of its subjects, or the real interests of humanity. Notwithstanding the lustre thrown over its latter days by the glorious defence of its capital, by the mild munificence of Montezuma, by the dauntless heroism of Guatemozin, the Aztecs were emphatically a fierce and brutal race, little calculated, in their best aspects, to excite our sympathy and regard. Their civilization, such as it was, was not their own, but reflected, per-

[39] Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 3, lib. 2, cap. 8.—Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 156.—Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva Esp., MS., lib. 12, cap. 42.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 30.—Ixtlilxochitl, Venida de los Esp., pp. 51, 52,

haps imperfectly, from a race whom they had succeeded in the land. It was, in respect to the Aztecs, a generous graft on a vicious stock, and could have brought no fruit to perfection. They ruled over their wide domains with a sword, instead of a sceptre. They did nothing to ameliorate the condition, or in any way promote the progress, of their vassals. Their vassals were serfs, used only to minister to their pleasure, held in awe by armed garrisons, ground to the dust by imposts in peace, by military conscriptions in war. They did not, like the Romans, whom they resembled in the nature of their conquests, extend the rights of citizenship to the conquered. They did not amalgamate them into one great nation, with common rights and interests. They held them as aliens,—even those, who in the Valley were gathered round the very walls of the capital. The Aztec metropolis, the heart of the monarchy, had not a sympathy, not a pulsation, in common with the rest of the body politic. It was a stranger in its own land.

The Aztecs not only did not advance the condition of their vassals, but, morally speaking, they did much to degrade it. How can a nation, where human sacrifices prevail, and especially when combined with cannibalism, further the march of civilization? How can the interests of humanity be consulted, where man is levelled to the rank of the brutes that perish? The influence of the Aztecs introduced their gloomy superstition into lands before unacquainted with it, or where, at least, it was not established in any great strength. The example of the capital was contagious. As the latter increased in opulence, the religious celebrations were conducted with still more terrible magnificence; in the same manner, as the gladiatorial shows of the Romans increased in pomp with the increasing splendor of the capital. Men became familiar with scenes of horror and the most loathsome abominations. Women and children — the whole nation became familiar with, and assisted at them. The heart was hardened, the manners were made ferocious, the feeble light of civilization, transmitted from a milder race, was growing fainter and fainter, as thousands and thousands of miserable victims, throughout the empire, were yearly fattened in its cages, sacrificed on its altars, dressed and served at its banquets! The whole land was converted into a vast human shambles! The empire of the Aztecs did not fall before its time.

Whether these unparalleled outrages furnish a sufficient plea to the Spaniards for their invasion, whether, with the Protestant, we are content to find a warrant for it in the natural rights and demands of civilization, or, with the Roman Catholic, in the good pleasure of the Pope,—on the one or the other of which

grounds, the conquests by most Christian nations in the East and the West have been defended,—it is unnecessary to discuss, as it has already been considered in a former Chapter. It is more material to inquire, whether, assuming the right, the conquest of Mexico was conducted with a proper regard to the claims of humanity. And here we must admit, that, with all allowance for the ferocity of the age and the laxity of its principles, there are passages which every Spaniard, who cherishes the fame of his countrymen, would be glad to see expunged from their history; passages not to be vindicated on the score of self-defence, or of necessity of any kind, and which must forever leave a dark spot on the annals of the Conquest. And yet, taken as a whole, the invasion, up to the capture of the capital, was conducted on principles less revolting to humanity, than most, perhaps than any, of the other conquests of the Castilian crown in the New World.

It may seem slight praise to say, that the followers of Cortés used no blood-hounds to hunt down their wretched victims, as in some other parts of the Continent, nor exterminated a peaceful and submissive population in mere wantonness of cruelty, as in the Islands. Yet it is something, that they were not so far infected by the spirit of the age, and that their swords were rarely stained with blood, unless it was indispensable to the success of their enterprise. Even in the last siege of the capital, the sufferings of the Aztecs, terrible as they were, do not imply any unusual cruelty in the victors; they were not greater than those inflicted on their own countrymen at home, in many a memorable instance, by the most polished nations, not merely of ancient times, but of our own. They were the inevitable consequences which follow from war, when, instead of being confined to its legitimate field, it is brought home to the hearthstone, to the peaceful community of the city,—its burghers untrained to arms, its women and children yet more defenceless. In the present instance, indeed, the sufferings of the besieged were in a great degree to be charge on themselves,—on their patriotic, but desperate, self-devotion. It was not the desire, as certainly it was not the interest, of the Spaniards, to destroy the capital, or its inhabitants. When any of these fell into their hands, they were kindly entertained, their wants supplied, and every means taken to infuse into them a spirit of conciliation; and this, too, it should be remembered, in despite of the dreadful doom to which they consigned their Christian captives. The gates of a fair capitulation were kept open, though unavailingly, to the last hour.

The right of conquest necessarily implies that of using what-

ever force may be necessary for overcoming resistance to the assertion of that right. For the Spaniards to have done otherwise than they did would have been to abandon the siege, and, with it, the conquest of the country. To have suffered the inhabitants, with their high-spirited monarch, to escape, would but have prolonged the miseries of war by transferring it to another and more inaccessible quarter. They literally, as far as the success of the expedition was concerned, had no choice. If our imagination is struck with the amount of suffering in this, and in similar scenes of the Conquest, it should be borne in mind, that it is a natural result of the great masses of men engaged in the conflict. The amount of suffering does not of itself show the amount of cruelty which caused it; and it is but justice to the Conquerors of Mexico to say, that the very brilliancy and importance of their exploits have given a melancholy celebrity to their misdeeds, and thrown them into somewhat bolder relief than strictly belongs to them.—It is proper that thus much should be stated, not to excuse their excesses, but that we may be enabled to make a more impartial estimate of their conduct, as compared with that of other nations under similar circumstances, and that we may not visit them with peculiar obloquy for evils which necessarily flow from the condition of war.[40] I have not drawn a veil over these evils; for the historian should not shrink from depicting, in their true colors, the atrocities of a condition, over which success is apt to throw a false halo of glory, but which, bursting asunder the strong bonds of human fellowship, purchases its triumphs by arming the hand of man against his brother, makes a savage of the civilized, and kindles the fires of hell in the bosom of the savage.

Whatever may be thought of the Conquest in a moral view, regarded as a military achievement it must fill us with astonishment. That a handful of adventurers, indifferently armed and

[40] By none has this obloquy been poured with such unsparing hand on the heads of the old Conquerors, as by their own descendants, the modern Mexicans. Ixtlilxochitl's editor, Bustamante, concludes an animated invective against the invaders, with recommending that a monument should be raised on the spot,—now dry land,—where Guatemozin was taken, which, as the proposed inscription itself intimates, should "devote to eternal execration the detested memory of these banditti!" Venida de los Esp., p. 52, nota.) One would suppose that the pure Aztec blood, uncontaminated by a drop of Castilian, flowed in the veins of the indignant editor and his compatriots; or, at least, that their sympathies for the conquered race would make them anxious to reinstate them in their ancient rights. Notwithstanding these bursts of generous indignation, however, which plentifully season the writings of the Mexicans of our day, we do not find, that the Revolution, or any of its numerous brood of *pronunciamientos*, has resulted in restoring them to an acre of their ancient territory.

equipped, should have landed on the shores of a powerful empire inhabited by a fierce and warlike race, and, in defiance of the reiterated prohibitions of its sovereign, have forced their way into the interior ;—that they should have done this, without knowledge of the language or of the land, without chart or compass to guide them, without any idea of the difficulties they were to encounter, totally uncertain whether the next step might bring them on a hostile nation, or on a desert, feeling their way along in the dark, as it were ; that, though nearly overwhelmed by their first encounter with the inhabitants, they should have still pressed on to the capital of the empire, and, having reached it, thrown themselves unhesitatingly into the midst of their enemies ;—that, so far from being daunted by the extraordinary spectacle there exhibited of power and civilization, they should have been but the more confirmed in their original design ;—that they should have seized the monarch, have executed his ministers before the eyes of his subjects, and, when driven forth with ruin from the gates, have gathered their scattered wreck together, and after a system of operations, pursued with consummate policy and daring, have succeeded in overturning the capital, and establishing their sway over the country ;—that all this should have been so effected by a mere handful of indigent adventurers, is a fact little short of the miraculous,—too startling for the probabilities demanded by fiction, and without a parallel in the pages of history.

Yet this must not be understood too literally ; for it would be unjust to the Aztecs themselves, at least to their military prowess, to regard the Conquest as directly achieved by the Spaniards alone. This would indeed be to arm the latter with the charmed shield of Ruggiero, and the magic lance of Astolfo, overturning its hundreds at a touch. The Indian empire was in a manner conquered by Indians. The first terrible encounter of the Spaniards with the Tlascalans, which had nearly proved their ruin, did in fact insure their success. It secured to them a strong native support, on which to retreat in the hour of trouble, and round which they could rally the kindred races of the land for one great and overwhelming assault. The Aztec monarchy fell by the hands of its own subjects, under the direction of European sagacity and science. Had it been united, it might have bidden defiance to the invaders. As it was, the capital was dissevered from the rest of the country, and the bolt, which might have passed off comparatively harmless, had the empire been cemented by a common principle of loyalty and patriotism, now found its way into every crack and crevice of the ill-compacted fabric, and buried it in its own ruins.—Its

fate may serve as a striking proof, that a government, which does not rest on the sympathies of its subjects, cannot long abide ; that human institutions, when not connected with human prosperity and progress, must fall,—if not before the increasing light of civilization, by the hand of violence ; by violence from within, if not from without. And who shall lament their fall ?

WITH the events of this Book terminates the history, by Solís, of the *Conquista de Méjico ;* a history, in many points of view, the most remarkable in the Castilian language.—Don Antonio de Solís was born of a respectable family, in October, 1610, at Alcalá de Henares, the nursery of science, and the name of which is associated in Spain with the brightest ornaments of both church and state. Solís, while very young, exhibited the sparks of future genius, especially in the vivacity of his imagination and a sensibility to the beautiful. He showed a decided turn for dramatic composition, and produced a comedy, at the age of seventeen, which would have reflected credit on a riper age. He afterwards devoted himself with assiduity to the study of ethics, the fruits of which are visible in the moral reflections which give a didactic character to the lightest of his compositions.

At the usual age he entered the University of Salamanca, and went through the regular course of the canon and civil law. But the imaginative spirit of Solís took much more delight in the soft revels of the Muses than in the severe discipline of the schools ; and he produced a number of pieces for the theatre, much esteemed for the richness of the diction, and for the ingenious and delicate texture of the intrigue. His taste for dramatic composition was, no doubt, nourished by his intimacy with the great Calderon, for whose dramas he prepared several *loas*, or prologues. The amiable manners and brilliant acquisitions of Solís recommended him to the favor of the Conde de Oropesa, viceroy of Navarre, who made him his secretary. The letters written by him, while in the service of this nobleman, and afterwards, have some of them been given to the public, and are much commended for the suavity and elegance of expression, characteristic of all the writings of their author.

The increasing reputation of Solís attracted the notice of the Court, and, in 1661, he was made secretary of the queen dowager,—an office which he had declined under Philip the Fourth,—and he was also preferred to the still more important post of Historiographer of the Indies, an appointment which stimulated his ambition to a bold career, different from any thing he had yet attempted. Five years after this event, at the age of fifty-six, he made a most important change in his way of life, by embracing the religious profession, and was admitted to priest's orders in 1666. From this time, he discontinued his addresses to the comic Muse; and, if we may credit his biographers, even refused, from conscientious scruples, to engage in the composition of the religious dramas, styled *autos sacramentales*, although the field was now opened to him by the death of the poet Calderon. But such tenderness of conscience it seems difficult to reconcile with the publication of his various comedies, which took place in 1681. It is certain, however, that he devoted himself zealously to his new profession, and to the historical studies in which his office of chronicler had engaged him. At length, the fruits of these studies were given to the world in his *Conquista de Méjico*, which appeared at Madrid in 1684. He designed, it is said, to continue the work to the times after the Conquest. But, if so, he was unfortunately prevented by his death, which occurred about two years after the publication of

his history, on the 13th of April, 1686. He died at the age of seventy-six, much regarded for his virtues, and admired for his genius, but in that poverty with which genius and virtue are too often requited.

The miscellaneous poems of Solís were collected and published a few years after his death, in one volume quarto ; which has since been reprinted. But his great work, that on which his fame is permanently to rest, is his *Conquista de Méjico*. Notwithstanding the field of history had been occupied by so many eminent Spanish scholars, there was still a new career open to Solís. His predecessors, with all their merits, had shown a strange ignorance of the principles of art. They had regarded historical writing, not as a work of art, but as a science. They had approached it on that side only, and thus divorced it from its legitimate connexion with *belles-lettres*. They had thought only of the useful, and nothing of the beautiful ; had addressed themselves to the business of instruction, not to that of giving pleasure ; to the man of letters, studious to hive up knowledge, not to the man of leisure, who turns to books as a solace or a recreation. Such writers are never in the hands of the many,—not even of the cultivated many. They are condemned to the closet of the student, painfully toiling after truth, and little mindful of the coarse covering under which she may be wrapped. Some of the most distinguished of the national historiographers, as, for example, Herrera and Zurita, two of the greatest names in Castile and Aragon, fall under this censure. They display acuteness, strength of argument, judicious criticism, wonderful patience and industry in accumulating details for their varied and voluminous compilations ; but in all the graces of composition,—in elegance of style, skilful arrangement of the story, and in selection of incidents, they are lamentably deficient. With all their high merits, intellectually considered, they are so defective on the score of art, that they can neither be popular, nor reverenced as the great classics of the nation.

Solís saw that the field was unappropriated by his predecessors, and had the address to avail himself of it. Instead of spreading himself over a vast range, where he must expend his efforts on cold and barren generalities, he fixed his attention on one great theme,—one, that, by its picturesque accompaniments, the romantic incidents of the story, the adventurous character of the actors, and their exploits, associated with many a proud and patriotic feeling in the bosom of the Spaniard,—one, in fine, that, by the brilliant contrast it afforded of European civilization to the barbaric splendors of an Indian dynasty, was remarkably suited to the kindling imagination of the poet. It was accordingly under its poetic aspect, that the eye of Solís surveyed it. He distributed the whole subject with admirable skill, keeping down the subordinate parts bringing the most important into high relief, and, by a careful study of its proportions, giving an admirable symmetry to the whole. Instead of bewildering the attention by a variety of objects, he presented to it one great and predominant idea, which shed its light, if I may so say, over his whole work. Instead of the numerous episodes, leading, like so many blind galleries, to nothing, he took the student along a great road, conducting straight towards the mark. At every step which we take in the narrative, we feel ourselves on the advance. The story never falters or stands still. That admirable *liaison* of the parts is maintained, by which one part is held to another, and each preceding event prepares the way for that which is to follow. Even those occasional interruptions, the great stumbling-block of the historian, which cannot be avoided, in consequence of the important bearing which the events that cause them have on the story, are managed with such address, that, if the interest is suspended, it is never snapped. Such halting-places, indeed, are so contrived, as to afford a repose not unwelcome after the stirring scenes in which the reader has been long involved; as the traveller, exhausted by the fatigues of his journey, finds

refreshment at places, which, in their own character, have little to recommend them.

The work, thus conducted, affords the interest of a grand spectacle—of some well-ordered drama, in which scene succeeds to scene, act to act, each unfolding and preparing the mind for the one that is to follow, until the whole is consummated by the grand and decisive *dénouement*. With this *dénouement*, the fall of Mexico, Solís has closed his history, preferring to leave the full impression unbroken on the reader's mind, rather than to weaken it by prolonging the narrative to the Conqueror's death. In this he certainly consulted effect.

Solís used the same care in regard to style, that he showed in the arrangement of his story. It is elaborated with nicest art, and displays that varied beauty and brilliancy which remind us of those finely variegated woods, which, under a high polish, display all the rich tints that lie beneath the surface. Yet this style finds little favor with foreign critics, who are apt to condemn it as tumid, artificial, and verbose. But let the foreign critic beware how he meddles with style, that impalpable essence which surrounds thought as with an atmosphere, giving to it its life and peculiar tone of color, differing in different nations, like the atmospheres which envelope the different planets of our system, and which require to be comprehended, that we may interpret the character of the objects seen through their medium. None but a native can pronounce with any confidence upon style, affected, as it is, by so many casual and local associations, that determine its propriety and its elegance. In the judgment of eminent Spanish critics, the style of Solís claims the merits of perspicuity, copiousness, and classic elegance. Even the foreigner will not be insensible to its power of conveying a living picture to the eye. Words are the colors of the writer, and Solís uses them with the skill of a consummate artist; now displaying the dark tumult of battle, and now refreshing the mind by scenes of quiet magnificence, or of soft luxury and repose.

Solís formed himself, to some extent, on the historical models of Antiquity. He introduced set speeches into the mouths of his personages, speeches, of his own composing. The practice may claim high authority among moderns as well as ancients, especially among the great Italian historians. It has its advantages, in enabling the writer to convey, in a dramatic form, the sentiments of the actors, and thus to maintain the charm of historic illusion by never introducing the person of the historian. It has also another advantage, that of exhibiting the author's own sentiments under cover of his hero's,—a more effective mode than if they were introduced as his own. But, to one trained in the school of the great English historians, the practice has something in it unsatisfactory and displeasing. There is something like deception in it. The reader is unable to determine what are the sentiments of the characters and what those of the author. History assumes the air of romance, and the bewildered student wanders about in an uncertain light, doubtful whether he is treading on fact or fiction.

It is open to another objection, when, as it frequently does, it violates the propriety of costume. Nothing is more difficult than to preserve the keeping of the piece, when the new is thus laid on the old,—the imitation of the antique on the antique itself. The declamations of Solís are much prized as specimens of eloquence. But they are too often misplaced; and the rude characters, into whose mouths they are inserted, are as little in keeping with them, as were the Roman heroes with the fashionable wig and sword, with which they strutted on the French stage in Louis the Fourteenth's time.

As to the value of the researches made by Solís in the compilation of his work it is not easy to speak, for the page is supported by none of the notes and references which enable us to track the modern author to the quarry

whence he has drawn his materials. It was not the usage of the age. The people of that day, and, indeed, of preceding times, were content to take the author's word for his facts. They did not require to know why he affirmed this thing or doubted that; whether he built his story on the authority of a friend, or of a foe, of a writer of good report or of evil report. In short, they did not demand a reason for their faith. They were content to take it on trust. This was very comfortable to the historian. It saved him a world of trouble in the process, and it prevented the detection of error, or, at least, of negligence. It prevented it with all who did not carefully go over the same ground with himself. They who have occasion to do this with Solís will probably arise from the examination with no very favorable idea of the extent of his researches; they will find, that, though his situation gave him access to the most valuable repositories in the kingdom, he rarely ascends to original documents, but contents himself with the most obvious and accessible; that he rarely discriminates between the contemporary testimony, and that of later date; in a word, that, in all that constitutes the *scientific* value of history, he falls far below his learned predecessor, Herrera,—rapid as was the composition of this last.

Another objection that may be made to Solís is his bigotry, or rather his fanaticism. This defect, so repugnant to the philosophic spirit which should preside over the labors of the historian, he possessed, it is true, in common with many of his countrymen. But in him it was carried to an uncommon height; and it was peculiarly unfortunate, since his subject, being the contest between the Christian and the Infidel, naturally drew forth the full display of this failing. Instead of regarding the benighted heathen with the usual measure of aversion in which they were held in the Peninsula, after the subjugation of Granada, he considered them as part of the grand confederacy of Satan, not merely breathing the spirit and acting under the invisible influence of the Prince of Darkness, but holding personal communication with him; he seems to have regarded them, in short, as his regular and organized militia. In this view, every act of the unfortunate enemy was a crime. Even good acts were misrepresented, or referred to evil motives; for how could goodness originate with the Spirit of Evil? No better evidence of the results of this way of thinking need be given, than that afforded by the ill-favored and unauthorized portrait which the historian has left us of Montezuma,—even in his dying hours. The war of the Conquest was, in short, in the historian's eye, a conflict between light and darkness, between the good principle and the evil principle, between the soldiers of Satan and the chivalry of the Cross. It was a Holy War, in which the sanctity of the cause covered up the sins of the Conquerors; and every one—the meanest soldiers who fell in it—might aspire to the crown of martyrdom. With sympathies thus pre-occupied, what room was there for that impartial criticism which is the life of history?

The historian's overweening partiality to the Conquerors is still further heightened by those feelings of patriotism,—a bastard patriotism,—which identifying the writer's own glory with that of his countrymen, makes him blind to their errors. This partiality is especially shown in regard to Cortés, the hero of the piece. The lights and shadows of the pictures are all disposed with reference to this principal character. The good is ostentatiously paraded before us, and the bad is winked out of sight. Solís does not stop here, but, by the artful gloss which makes the worse appear the better cause, he calls on us to admire his hero sometimes for his very transgressions. No one, not even Gomara himself, is such a wholesale encomiast of the great Conqueror; and, when his views are contradicted by the statements of honest Diaz, Solís is sure to find a motive for the discrepancy in some sinister purpose of the veteran. He knows more of Cortés, of his actions and his motives, than his companions in arms, or his admiring chaplain.

In this way Solís has presented a beautiful image of his hero,—but it is a hero of romance ; a character without a blemish. An eminent Castilian critic has commended him for "having conducted his history with so much art, that it has become a panegyric." This may be true ; but, if history be panegyric, panegyric is not history.

Yet, with all these defects,—the existence of which no candid critic will be disposed to deny,—the History of Solís has found such favor with his own countrymen, that it has been printed and reprinted, with all the refinements of editorial luxury. It has been translated into the principle languages of Europe ; and such is the charm of its composition, and its exquisite finish as a work of art, that it will doubtless be as imperishable as the language in which it is written, or the memory of the events which it records.

At this place, also, we are to take leave of father Sahagun, who has accompanied us through our narrative. As his information was collected from the traditions of the natives, the contemporaries of the Conquest, it has been of considerable importance in corroborating or contradicting the statements of the Conquerors. Yet its value in this respect is much impaired by the wild and random character of many of the Aztec traditions,—so absurd, indeed, as to carry their own refutation with them. Where the passions are enlisted, what is too absurd to find credit?

The Twelfth Book—as it would appear from his Preface, the Ninth Book originally—of his *Historia de la Nueva España* is devoted to the account of the Conquest. In 1585, thirty years after the first draft, he rewrote this part of his great work, moved to it, as he tells us, "by the desire to correct the defects of the first account, in which some things had found their way that had better been omitted, and other things omitted which were well deserving of record." * It might be supposed, that the obloquy, which the missionary had brought on his head by his honest recital of the Aztec traditions, would have made him more circumspect in this *rifacimento* of his former narrative. But I have not found it so ; or that there has been any effort to mitigate the statements that bore hardest on his countrymen. As this manuscript copy must have been that which the author himself deemed the most correct, since it is his last revision, and as it is more copious than the printed narrative, I have been usually guided by it.

Señor de Bustamante is mistaken in supposing that the edition of this Twelfth Book, which he published in Mexico, in 1829, is from the *reformed* copy of Sahagun. The manuscript cited in these pages is undoubtedly a transcript of that copy. For in the Preface to it, as we have seen, the author himself declares it.—In the intrinsic value of the two drafts there is, after all, but little difference.

* "En el libro nono, donde se trata esta Conquista, se hiciéron ciertos defectos ; y fué, que algunas cosas se pusiéron en la narracion de este Conquista que fuéron mal puestas ; y otras se callárou, que fuéron mal calladas. Por esta causa, este ano de mil quinientos ochenta y cinco, enmende este Libro." MS.

BOOK SEVENTH.

CONCLUSION.

SUBSEQUENT CAREER OF CORTES.

BOOK VII.

CONCLUSION.

SUBSEQUENT CAREER OF CORTES.

CHAPTER I.

TORTURE OF GUATEMOZIN.—SUBMISSION OF THE COUNTRY.—RE-BUILDING OF THE CAPITAL.—MISSION TO CASTILE.—COMPLAINTS AGAINST CORTES.—HE IS CONFIRMED IN HIS AUTHORITY.

1521—1522.

THE history of the Conquest of Mexico terminates with the surrender of the capital. But the history of the Conquest is so intimately blended with that of the extraordinary man who achieved it, that there would seem to be an incompleteness in the narrative, if it were not continued to the close of his personal career. This part of the subject has been very imperfectly treated by preceding writers. I shall therefore avail myself of the authentic materials in my possession to give a brief sketch of the brilliant, but checkered, fortunes which marked the subsequent career of Cortés.

The first ebullition of triumph was succeeded in the army by very different feelings, as they beheld the scanty spoil gleaned from the conquered city, and as they brooded over the inadequate compensation they were to receive for all their toils and sufferings. Some of the soldiers of Narvaez, with feelings of bitter disappointment, absolutely declined to accept their shares. Some murmured audibly against the general, and others against Guatemozin, who, they said, could reveal, if he chose, the place where the treasures were secreted. The white walls of the barracks were covered with epigrams and pasquinades levelled at

Cortés, whom they accused of taking one-fifth of the booty as Commander-in-chief, and another fifth as King." As Guatemozin refused to make any revelation in respect to the treasure, or rather declared there was none to make, the soldiers loudly insisted on his being put to the torture. But for this act of violence, so contrary to the promise of protection recently made to the Indian prince, Cortés was not prepared; and he resisted the demand, until the men, instigated, it is said, by the royal treasurer, Alderete, accused the general of a secret understanding with Guatemozin, and of a design to defraud the Spanish sovereigns and themselves. These unmerited taunts stung Cortés to the quick, and in an evil hour he delivered the Aztec prince into the hands of his enemies to work their pleasure on him.

But the hero, who had braved death in its most awful forms, was not to be intimidated by bodily suffering. When his companion, the cacique of Tacuba, who was put to the torture with him, testified his anguish by his groans, Guatemozin coldly rebuked him by exclaiming, "And do you think I, then, am taking my pleasure in my bath?"[1] At length Cortés, ashamed of the base part he was led to play, rescued the Aztec prince from his tormentors before it was too late;—not, however, before it was too late for his own honor, which has suffered an indelible stain from his treatment of his royal prisoner.

All that could be wrung from Guatemozin by the extremity of his sufferings was the confession that much gold had been thrown into the water. But, although the best divers were employed, under the eye of Cortés himself, to search the oozy bed of the lake, only a few articles of inconsiderable value were drawn from it. They had better fortune in searching a pond in Guatemozin's gardens, where a sun, as it is called, probably one of the Aztec calendar wheels, made of pure gold, of great size and thickness, was discovered. The cacique of Tacuba had confessed that a quantity of treasure was buried in the ground at one of his own villas. But, when the Spaniards carried him to the spot, he alleged that "his only motive for saying so was the hope of dying on the road!" The soldiers, disappointed in their expectations, now, with the usual caprice of an unlicensed mob, changed their tone, and openly accused their commander of cruelty to his captive. The charge was well deserved,—but not from them.[2]

[1] "¿Estoi yo en algun deleite, ó baño?" (Gomara, Crónica, cap. 145.) The literal version is not so poetical as "the bed of flowers," into which this exclamation of Guatemozin is usually rendered.

[2] The most particular account of this disgraceful transaction is given by Bernal Diaz, one of those selected to accompany the lord of Tacuba to his

The tidings of the fall of Mexico were borne on the wings of the wind over the plateau, and down the broad sides of the Cordilleras. Many an envoy made his appearance from the remote Indian tribes, anxious to learn the truth of the astounding intelligence, and to gaze with their own eyes on the ruins of the detested city. Among these were ambassadors from the kingdom of Michuacan, a powerful and independent state, inhabited by one of the kindred Nahuatlac races, and lying between the Mexican Valley and the Pacific. The embassy was soon followed by the king of the country in person, who came in great state to the Castilian quarters. Cortés received him with equal parade, astonished him by the brilliant evolutions of his cavalry, and by the thunders of his ordnance, and escorted him in one of the brigantines round the fallen city, whose pile of smouldering palaces and temples was all that now remained of the once dread capital of Anahuac. The Indian monarch gazed with silent awe on the scene of desolation, and eagerly craved the the protection of the invincible beings who had caused it.[3] His example was followed by ambassadors from the remote regions which had never yet had intercourse with the Spaniards. Cortés, who saw the boundaries of his empire thus rapidly enlarging, availed himself of the favorable dispositions of the natives to ascertain the products and resources of their several countries.

Two small detachments were sent into the friendly state of Michuacan, through which country they penetrated to the borders of the great Southern ocean. No European had as yet descended on its shores so far north of the equator. The Spaniards eagerly advanced into its waters, erected a cross on the sandy margin, and took possession of it, with all the usual formalities, in the name of their Most Catholic Majesties. On their return, they visited some of the rich districts towards the north, since celebrated for their mineral treasures, and brought back samples of gold and California pearls, with an account of their discovery of the Ocean. The imagination of Cortés was

villa. (Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 157.) He notices the affair with becoming indignation, but excuses Cortés from a voluntary part in it.

[3] Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 308.

The simple statement of the Conqueror contrasts strongly with the pompous narrative of Herrera, (Hist. General, dec. 3, lib. 3, cap. 3,) and with that of father Cavo, who may draw a little on his own imagination. "Cortés en una canoa ricamente entapizada, llevó á el Rey Vehichilze, y á los nobles de Michoacan á México. Este es uno de los palacios de Moctheuzoma (les decia) ; allí está el gran templo de Huitzilopuctli ; estas ruinas son del grande edificio de Quauhtemoc, aquellos de la gran plaza del mercado. Conmovido Vehichilzi de este espectáculo, se le saltáron las lágrimas." Los Tres Siglos de México, (México, 1836,) tom. I. p. 13.

kindled, and his soul swelled with exultation at the splendid prospects which their discoveries unfolded. "Most of all," he writes to the emperor, "do I exult in the tidings brought me of the Great Ocean. For in it, as cosmographers, and those learned men who know most about the Indies, inform us, are scattered the rich isles teeming with gold and spices and precious stones."[4] He at once sought a favorable spot for a colony on the shores of the Pacific, and made arrangements for the construction of four vessels to explore the mysteries of these unknown seas. This was the beginning of his noble enterprises for discovery in the Gulf of California.

Although the greater part of Anahuac, overawed by the successes of the Spaniards, had tendered their allegiance, there were some, especially on the southern slopes of the Cordilleras, who showed a less submissive disposition. Cortés instantly sent out strong detachments under Sandoval and Alvarado to reduce the enemy and establish colonies in the conquered provinces. The highly colored reports, which Alvarado, who had a quick scent for gold, gave of the mineral wealth of Oaxaca, no doubt operated with Cortés in determining him to select this region for his own particular domain.

The commander-in-chief, with his little band of Spaniards, now daily recruited by reinforcements from the Islands, still occupied the quarters of Cojohuacan, which they had taken up at the termination of the siege. Cortés did not immediately decide in what quarter of the Valley to establish the new capital which was to take the place of the ancient Tenochtitlan. The situation of the latter, surrounded by water and exposed to occasional inundations, had some obvious disadvantages. But there was no doubt that in some part of the elevated and central plateau of the Valley the new metropolis should be built, to which both European and Indian might look up as to the head of the colonial empire of Spain. At length he decided on retaining the site of the ancient city, moved to it, as he says, "by its past renown, and the memory"—not an enviable one, surely—"in which it was held among the nations"; and he made preparations for the reconstruction of the capital on a scale of mag-

[4] "Que todos los que tienen alguna ciencia, y experiencia en la Navegacion de las Indias, han tenido por muy cierto, que descubriendo por estas Partes la Mar del Sur, se habian de hallar muchas Islas ricas de Oro, y Perlas, y Piedras preciosas, y Especería, y se habian de descubrir y hallar otros muchos secretos y cosas admirables." Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, pp. 302, 303.

[5] "Y crea Vuestra Magestad, que cada dia se irá ennobleciendo en tal manera, que como antes fué Principal, y Señora de todas estas Provincias, que lo será tambien de aquí adelante." Ibid., p. 307.

nificence, which should, in his own language, "raise her to the rank of Queen of the surrounding provinces, in the same manner as she had been of yore."[5]

The labor was to be performed by the Indian population, drawn from all quarters of the Valley, and including the Mexicans themselves, great numbers of whom still lingered in the neighborhood of their ancient residence. At first they showed reluctance, and even symptoms of hostility, when called to this work of humiliation by their conquerors. But Cortés had the address to secure some of the principal chiefs in his interests, and, under their authority and direction, the labors of their countrymen was conducted. The deep groves of the Valley and the forests of the neighboring hills supplied cedar, cypress, and other durable woods, for the interior of the buildings, and the quarries of *tetzontli* and the ruins of the ancient edifices furnished abundance of stone. As there were no beasts of draught employed by the Aztecs, an immense number of hands was necessarily required for the work. All within the immediate control of Cortés were pressed into the service. The spot so recently deserted now swarmed with multitudes of Indians of various tribes, and with Europeans, the latter directing, while the others labored. The prophecy of the Aztecs was accomplished.[6] And the work of reconstruction went forward with a rapidity like that shown by an Asiatic despot, who concentrates the population of an empire on the erection of a favorite capital.[7]

Yet the condition of Cortés, notwithstanding the success of his arms, suggested many causes for anxiety. He had not received a word of encouragement from home,—not a word, indeed, of encouragement or censure. In what light his irregular course was regarded by the government or the nation was still matter of painful uncertainty. He now prepared another Letter to the emperor, the Third in the published series, written in the same simple and energetic style which has entitled his Commentaries, as they may be called, to a comparison with those of Cæsar. It was dated at Cojohuacan, May 15, 1522,

[6] Ante, p. 262.

[7] Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 3, lib. 4, cap. 8.—Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 32.—Camargo, Hist. de Tlascala, MS.—Gomara, Crónica, cap. 162.

"En la cual (la edificacion de la ciudad) los primeros años andaba mas gente que en la edificacion del templo de Jerusalem, porque era tanta la gente que andaba en las obras, que apénas podia hombre romper por algunas calles y calzadas, aunque son muy anchas." (Toribio, Hist. de los Indios, MS., Parte 1, cap. 1.) Ixtlilxochitl supplies any blank which the imagination might leave, by filling it up with 400,000, as the number of natives employed in this work by Cortés! Venida de los Esp., p. 60.

and in it he recapitulated the events of the final siege of the capital, and his subsequent operations, accompanied by many sagacious reflections, as usual, on the character and resources of the country. With this letter he purposed to send the royal fifth of the spoils of Mexico, and a rich collection of fabrics, especially of gold and jewelry wrought into many rare and fanciful forms. One of the jewels was an emerald, cut in a pyramidal shape, of so extraordinary a size, that the base was as broad as the palm of the hand![8] The collection was still further augmented by specimens of many of the natural products, as well as of animals peculiar to the country.

The army wrote a letter to accompany that of Cortés, in which they expatiated on his manifold services, and besought the emperor to ratify his proceedings and confirm him in his present authority. The important mission was intrusted to two of the general's confidential officers, Quiñones and Avila. It proved to be unfortunate. The agents touched at the Azores, where Quiñones lost his life in a brawl. Avila, resuming his voyage, was captured by a French privateer, and the rich spoils of the Aztecs went into the treasury of his Most Christian Majesty. Francis the First gazed with pardonable envy on the treasures which his Imperial rival drew from his colonial domains; and he intimated his discontent by peevishly expressing a desire "to see the clause in Adam's testament which entitled his brothers of Castile and Portugal to divide the New World between them." Avila found means, through a private hand, of transmitting his letters, the most important part of his charge, to Spain, where they reached the court in safety.[9]

While these events were passing, affairs in Spain had been taking an unfavorable turn for Cortés. It may seem strange that the brilliant exploits of the Conqueror of Mexico should have attracted so little notice from the government at home. But the country was at that time distracted by the dismal feuds of the *comunidades*. The sovereign was in Germany, too much engrossed by the cares of the empire to allow leisure for those of his own kingdom. The reins of government were in the hands of Adrian, Charles's preceptor; a man whose ascetic and studious habits better qualified him to preside over a college of

[8] "Sirviêron al Emperador con muchas piedras, i entre ellas con una esmeralda fina, como la palma, pero quadrada, i que se remataba en punta como pirámide." (Gomara, Crónica, cap. 146.) Martyr confirms the account of this wonderful emerald, which, he says, "was reported to the king and council to be nearly as broad as the palm of the hand, and which those, who had seen it, thought could not be procured for any sum." De Orbe Novo, dec. 8, cap. 4.

[9] Ibid., ubi supra.—Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 169.

monks, than to fill, as he successively did, the most important posts in Christendom,—first as Regent of Castile, afterwards as Head of the Church. Yet the slow and hesitating Adrian could not have so long passed over in silence the important services of Cortés, but for the hostile interference of Velasquez, the governor of Cuba, sustained by Fonseca, bishop of Burgos, the chief person in the Spanish colonial department. This prelate, from his elevated station, possessed paramount authority in all matters relating to the Indies, and he had exerted it from the first, as we have already seen, in a manner most prejudicial to the interest of Cortés. He had now the address to obtain a warrant from the regent, which was designed to ruin the Conqueror at the very moment when his great enterprise had been crowned with success. The instrument, after recapitulating the offences of Cortés in regard to Velasquez, appoints a commissioner with full powers to visit the country, to institute an inquiry into the general's conduct, to suspend him from his functions, and even to seize his person and sequestrate his property, until the pleasure of the Castilian court could be known. The warrant was signed by Adrian, at Burgos, on the 11th of April, 1521, and countersigned by Fonseca.[10]

The individual selected for the delicate task of apprehending Cortés and bringing him to trial, on the theatre of his own discoveries and in the heart of his own camp, was named Christóval de Tapia, *veedor*, or inspector of the gold foundries in St. Domingo. He was a feeble, vascillating man, as little competent to cope with Cortés in civil matters, as Narvaez had shown himself to be in military.

The commissioner, clothed in his brief authority, landed, in December, at Villa Rica. But he was coldly received by the magistrates of the city. His credentials were disputed, on the ground of some technical informality. It was objected, moreover, that his commission was founded on obvious misrepresentations to the government; and, notwithstanding a most courteous and complimentary epistle which he received from Cortés, congratulating him, as an old friend, on his arrival, the *veedor* soon found that he was neither to be permitted to penetrate far into the country, nor to exercise any control there. He loved money, and, as Cortés knew the weak side of his

[10] The instrument also conferred similar powers in respect to an inquiry into Narvaez's treatment of the licentiate Ayllon. The whole document is cited in a deposition drawn up by the notary, Alonso de Vergara, setting forth the proceedings of Tapia and the municipality of Villa Rica, dated at Cempoalla, Dec. 24th, 1521. The MS. forms part of the collection of Don Vargas Ponçe, in the archives of the Academy of History at Madrid.

"old friend," he proposed to purchase his horses, slaves, and equipage, at a tempting price. The dreams of disappointed ambition were gradually succeeded by those of avarice; and the discomfited commissioner consented to reëmbark for Cuba, well freighted with gold, if not with glory, and provided with fresh matter of accusation against the high-handed measures of Cortés.[11]

Thus left in undisputed possession of authority, the Spanish commander went forward with vigor in his plans for the settlement of his conquests. The Panuchese, a fierce people on the borders of the Panuco, on the Atlantic coast, had taken up arms against the Spaniards. Cortés marched at the head of a considerable force into their country, defeated them in two pitched battles, and, after a severe campaign, reduced the warlike tribe to subjection.

A subsequent insurrection was punished with greater severity. They rose on the Spaniards, massacred five hundred of their oppressors, and menaced with destruction the neighboring settlement of San Estévan. Cortés ordered Sandoval to chastise the insurgents; and that officer, after a campaign of incredible hardship, completely routed the barbarians, captured four hundred of their chiefs, and, after the affected formalities of a trial, sentenced every man of them to the stake or the gibbet. "By which means," says Cortés, "God be praised! the safety of the Spaniards was secured, and the province once more restored to tranquillity and peace."[12] He had omitted to mention in his Letter his ungenerous treatment of Guatemozin. But the undisguised and *naïve* manner, so to speak, in which he details these circumstances to the emperor, shows that he attached no discredit to the deed. It was the just recompense of *rebellion;* a word that has been made the apology for more atrocities than any other word,—save *religion.*

During this interval, the great question in respect to Cortés and the colony had been brought to a decisive issue. The general must have succumbed under the insidious and implacable attacks of his enemies, but for the sturdy opposition of a few powerful friends zealously devoted to his interests. Among them

[11] Relacion de Vergara, MS.—Rel. Terc. de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, pp. 309–314.—Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 158.

The *regidores* of Mexico and other places remonstated against Cortés' leaving the Valley to meet Tapia, on the ground that his presence was necessary to overawe the natives. (MS., Coyoacan, Dec. 12, 1521.) The general acquiesced in the force of a remonstrance, which, it is not improbable, was made at his own suggestion.

[12] "Como ya (loado nuestro Señor) estaba toda la Provincia muy pacífica, y segura." Rel. Quarta de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p 367.

may be mentioned his own father, Don Martin Cortés, a discreet and efficient person,[13] and the Duke de Bejar, a powerful nobleman, who from an early period had warmly espoused the cause of Cortés. By their representations the timid regent was at length convinced that the measures of Fonseca were prejudicial to the interests of the Crown, and an order was issued interdicting him from further interference in any matters in which Cortés was concerned.

While the exasperated prelate was chafing under this affront, both the commissioners Tapia and Narvaez arrived in Castile. The latter had been ordered to Cojohuacan after the surrender of the capital, where his cringing demeanor formed a striking contrast to the swaggering port which he had assumed on first entering the country. When brought into the presence of Cortes, he knelt down and would have kissed his hand, but the latter raised him from the ground, and, during his residence in his quarters, treated him with every mark of respect. The general soon afterwards permitted his unfortunate rival to return to Spain, where, he proved, as might have been anticipated, a most bitter and implacable enemy.[14]

These two personages, reinforced by the discontented prelate, brought forward their several charges against Cortés with all the acrimony which mortified vanity and the thirst of vengeance could inspire. Adrian was no longer in Spain, having been called to the chair of St. Peter; but Charles the Fifth after his long absence, had returned to his dominions, in July, 1522. The royal ear was instantly assailed with accusations of Cortés on the one hand and his vindication on the other, till the young monarch, perplexed, and unable to decide on the merits of the question, referred the whole subject to the decision of a board selected for the purpose. It was drawn partly from the members of his privy council, and partly from the Indian department, with the Grand Chancellor of Naples as its president; and constituted altogether a tribunal of the highest respectability for integrity and wisdom.[15]

By this learned body a patient and temperate hearing was

[13] The Muñoz collection of MSS. contains a power of attorney given by Cortés to his father, authorizing him to manage all negotiations with the emperor, and with private persons, to conduct all lawsuits on his behalf, to pay over and receive money, &c.

[14] Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 158.

[15] Sayas, Annales de Aragon, (Zaragoza, 1666,) cap. 63, 78.

It is sufficient voucher for the respectability of this court, that we find in it the name of Dr. Galindez de Carbajal, an eminent Castilian jurist, grown gray in the service of Ferdinand and Isabella, whose confidence he enjoyed in the highest degree.

given to the parties. The enemies of Cortés accused him of having seized and finally destroyed the fleet intrusted to him by Velasquez, and fitted out at the governor's expense; of having afterwards usurped powers in contempt of the royal prerogative; of the unjustifiable treatment of Narvaez and Tapia, when they had been lawfully commissioned to supersede him; of cruelty to the natives, and especially to Guatemozin; of embezzling the royal treasures, and remitting but a small part of its dues to the Crown; of squandering the revenues of the conquered countries in useless and wasteful schemes, and particularly in rebuilding the capital on a plan of unprecedented extravagance; of pursuing, in short, a system of violence and extortion, without respect to the public interest, or any other end than his own selfish aggrandisement.

In answer to these grave charges, the friends of Cortés adduced evidence to show, that he had defrayed with his own funds two-thirds of the cost of the expedition. The powers of Velasquez extended only to traffic, not to establish a colony. Yet the interests of the Crown required the latter. The army had therefore necessarily assumed this power to themselves; but, having done so, they had sent intelligence of their proceedings to the emperor and solicited his confirmation of them. The rupture with Narvaez was that commander's own fault; since Cortés would have met him amicably, had not the violent measures of his rival, threatening the ruin of the expedition, compelled him to an opposite course. The treatment of Tapia was vindicated on the grounds alleged to that officer by the municipality at Cempoalla. The violence to Guatemozin was laid at the door of Alderete, the royal treasurer, who had instigated the soldiers to demand it. The remittances to the Crown, it was clearly proved, so far from falling short of the legitimate fifth, had considerably exceeded it. If the general had expended the revenues of the country on costly enterprises and public works, it was for the interest of the country that he did so, and he had incurred a heavy debt by straining his own credit to the utmost for the same great objects. Neither did they deny, that, in the same spirit, he was now rebuilding Mexico on a scale which should be suited to the metropolis of a vast and opulent empire.

They enlarged on the opposition he had experienced, throughout his whole career, from the governor of Cuba, and still more from the bishop of Burgos, which latter functionary, instead of affording him the aid to have been expected, had discouraged recruits, stopped his supplies, sequestered such property as, from time to time, he had sent to Spain, and falsely represented his remittances to the Crown, as coming from the governor of

Cuba. In short, such and so numerous were the obstacles thrown in his path, that Cortés had been heard to say, "he had found it more difficult to contend against his own countrymen than against the Aztecs." They concluded with expatiating on the brilliant results of his expedition, and asked if the council were prepared to dishonor the man who, in the face of such obstacles, and with scarcely other resources than what he found in himself, had won an empire for Castile, such as was possessed by no European potentate![16]

This last appeal was irresistible. However irregular had been the manner of the proceeding, no one could deny the grandeur of the results. There was not a Spaniard that could be insensible to such services, or that would not have cried out, "Shame!" at an ungenerous requital of them. There were three Flemings in the council; but there seems to have been no difference of opinion in the body. It was decided, that neither Velasquez nor Fonseca should interfere further in the concerns of New Spain. The difficulties of the former with Cortés were regarded in the nature of a private suit; and, as such, redress must be sought by the regular course of law. The acts of Cortés were confirmed in their full extent. He was constituted Governor, Captain-General, and Chief Justice of New Spain, with power to appoint to all offices, civil and military, and to order any person to leave the country whose residence there he might deem prejudicial to the interests of the Crown. This judgment of the council was ratified by Charles the Fifth, and the commission investing Cortés with these ample powers was signed by the emperor at Valladolid, October 15th, 1522. A liberal salary was provided, to enable the governor of New Spain to maintain his office with suitable dignity. The principal officers were recompensed with honors and substantial emoluments; and the troops, together with some privileges, grateful to the vanity of the soldier, received the promise of liberal grants of land. The emperor still further complimented them by a letter written to the army with his own hand, in which he acknowledged its services in the fullest manner.[17]

From this hour the influence of Fonseca in the Indian department was at an end. He did not long survive his chagrin, as he died in the following year. No man was in a situation to do more for the prosperity of his country than the bishop of Burgos.

[16] Sayas, annales de Aragon, cap. 78.—Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 3, lib. 4, cap. 3.—Probanza en la Villa Segura, MS.—Declaraciones de Puertocarrero y de Montejo, MSS.

[17] Nombramiento de Governador y Captain General y Justicia Mayor de Nueva España, MS —also Bernal Diaz, Hist de la Conquista, cap. 168.

For more than thirty years, ever since the first dawn of discovery under Columbus, he had held supreme control over colonial affairs; and it lay with him, therefore, in an especial degree, to give ardor to enterprise, and to foster the youthful fortunes of the colonies. But he lay like a blight upon them. He looked with an evil eye on the most illustrious of the Spanish discoverers, and sought only to throw impediments in their career. Such had been his conduct toward Columbus, and such to Cortés. By a wise and generous policy, he might have placed his name among the great lights of his age. As it was, he only served to bring these into greater lustre by contrast with his own dark and malignant nature. His career shows the overweening ascendancy which the ecclesiastical profession possessed in Castile in the sixteenth century; when it could raise a man to so important a station, for which he was totally unfit, and keep him there after he had proved himself to be so.[18]

The messengers, who bore the commission of Cortés to Mexico, touched on their way at Cuba, where the tidings were proclaimed by sound of trumpet. It was a death-blow to the hopes of Velasquez. Exasperated by the failure of his schemes, impoverished by the expense of expeditions of which others had reaped the fruits, he had still looked forward to eventual redress, and cherished the sweet hope of vengeance,—long delayed. That hope was now gone. There was slight chance of redress, he well knew, in the tedious and thorny litigation of the Castilian courts. Ruined in fortune, dishonored before the nation, the haughty spirit of the governor was humbled in the dust. He would take no comfort, but fell into a sullen melancholy, and in a few months died—if report be true—of a broken heart.[19]

The portrait usually given of Velasquez is not favorable. Yet Las Casas speaks kindly of him, and, when his prejudices are not involved, there can be no better authority. But Las Casas knew him, when, in his earlier days, the missionary first landed in Cuba. The governor treated him with courtesy, and even confidence; and it was natural, that the condescension of a man of high family and station should have made its impression on the feelings of the poor ecclesiastic. In most accounts he is depicted as a haughty, irascible person, jealous of authority, and

[18] The character of Fonseca has been traced by the same hand which has traced that of Columbus. (Irving's Life and Voyages of Columbus, Appendix, No. 32.) Side by side they will go down to posterity in the beautiful page of the historian, though the characters of the two individuals have been inscribed with pens as different from each other as the golden and iron pen which Paolo Giovio tells us he employed in his compositions.

[19] Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 158.

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covetous of wealth. He quarrelled with Grijalva, Cortés' predecessor, apparently without cause. With as little reason, he broke with Cortés before he left the port. He proposed objects to himself in their nature incompatible. He proposed that others should fight his battles, and that he should win the laurels ; that others should make discoveries, and that he should reap the fruits of them. None but a weak mind would have conformed to his conditions, and a weak mind could not have effected his objects. His appointment of Cortés put him in a false position for the rest of his life. His efforts to retrieve his position only made things worse. The appointment of Cortés to the command was scarcely a greater error, than the subsequent appointment of Narvaez and of Tapia. The life of Velasquez was a series of errors.

The announcement of the emperor's commission, confirming Cortés in the supreme authority of New Spain, was received there with general acclamation. The army rejoiced in having, at last, secured not merely an amnesty for their irregular proceedings, but a distinct acknowledgment of their services. The nomination of Cortés to the supreme command put his mind at ease as to the past, and opened to him a noble theatre for future enterprise. The soldiers congratulated themselves on the broad powers conferred on their commander, and, as they reckoned up their scars and their services, indulged in golden dreams and the most vague and visionary expectations. It is not strange that their expectations should have been disappointed.

CHAPTER II.

MODERN MEXICO.—SETTLEMENT OF THE COUNTRY.—CONDITION OF THE NATIVES.—CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES.—CULTIVATION OF THE SOIL.—VOYAGES AND EXPEDITIONS.

1522—1524.

IN less than four years from the destruction of Mexico, a new city had risen on its ruins, which, if inferior to the ancient capital in extent, surpassed it in magnificence and strength. It occupied so exactly the same site as its predecessor, that the *plaza mayor*, or great square, was the same spot which had been covered by the huge *teocalli* and the palace of Montezuma ; while the principal streets took their departure as before from this central point, and, passing through the whole length of the city, terminated at the principal causeways. Great alterations, however, took place in the fashion of the architecture. The streets were widened, many of the canals were filled up, and the edifices were constructed on a plan better accommodated to European taste and the wants of a European population.

On the site of the temple of the Aztec war-god rose the stately cathedral dedicated to St. Francis ; and, as if to complete the triumphs of the Cross, the foundations were laid with the broken images of the Aztec gods.[1] In a corner of the square, on the ground once covered by the House of Birds, stood a Franciscan convent, a magnificent pile, erected a few years after the Conquest by a lay brother, Pedro de Gante, a natural son, it is said, of Charles the Fifth.[2] In an opposite quarter of the same square Cortés caused his own palace to be constructed. It was built of hewn stone, and seven thousand cedar beams are said to have been used for the interior.[3] The government afterwards appropriated it to the residence of the viceroys ; and the Conqueror's descendants, the dukes of Monteleone, were allowed to erect a new mansion in another part of the *plaza*, on the spot which, by

[1] Herrera, Hist. General, dec, 3, lib. 4, cap. 8.
[2] Clavigero, Stor. del Messico, tom. I. p. 271.—Humboldt, Essai Politique, tom. II. p. 58.
[3] Herrera, Hist. General, ubi supra.

an ominous coincidence, had been covered by the palace of Montezuma.[4]

The houses occupied by the Spaniards were of stone, combining with elegance a solid strength which made them capable of defence like so many fortresses.[5] The Indian buildings were for the most part of an inferior quality. They were scattered over the ancient district of Tlatelolco, where the nation had made its last stand for freedom. This quarter was also provided with a spacious cathedral; and thirty inferior churches attested the care of the Spaniards for the spiritual welfare of the natives.[6] It was in watching over his Indian flock, and in the care of the hospitals with which the new capital was speedily endowed, that the good father Olmedo, when oppressed by growing infirmities, spent the evening of his days.[7]

To give greater security to the Spaniards, Cortés caused a strong fortress to be erected in a place since known as the *Matadero*.[8] It was provided with a dock-yard, and the brigantines, which had served in the siege of Mexico, were long preserved there as memorials of the Conquest. When the fortress was completed, the general, owing to the evil offices of Fonseca, found himself in want of artillery and ammunition for its defence. He supplied the former deficiency by causing cannon to be cast in his own founderies, made of the copper which was common in the country, and tin which he obtained with more difficulty from the mines of Tasco. By this means, and a contribution which he received from the shipping, he contrived to mount his walls with seventy pieces of ordnance. Stone balls, used much in that age, could easily be made; but for the manufacture of his powder, although there was nitre in abundance, he was obliged to seek the sulphur by a perilous expedition into the bowels of the great *volcan*.[9] Such were the resources displayed by Cortés, enabling him to supply every deficiency, and to triumph over every obstacle which the malice of his enemies had thrown in his path.

The general's next care was to provide a population for the capital. He invited the Spaniards thither by grants of lands and houses, while the Indians, with politic liberality, were permitted to live under their own chiefs as before, and to enjoy various immunities. With this encouragement, the Spanish quarter of the

[4] Humboldt, Essai Politiqe, tom. II. p. 72.
[5] Rel. d' un gent., ap. Ramusio, tom. III. fol. 309.
[6] Ibid., ubi supra.
[7] Bernal Diaz, Hist de la Conquista, cap. 177.
[8] Rel. Quarta de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 376, nota.
[9] For an account of this singular enterprise, see Ante, Vol. I p. 352.

city in the neighborhood of the great square could boast in a few years two thousand families ; while the Indian district of Tlatelolco included no less than thirty thousand.[10] The various trades and occupations were resumed ; the canals were again covered with barges ; two vast markets in the respective quarters of the capital displayed all the different products and manufactures of the surrounding country ; and the city swarmed with a busy, industrious population, in which the white man and the Indian, the conqueror and the conquered, mingled together promiscuously in peaceful and picturesque confusion. Not twenty years had elapsed since the Conquest, when a missionary who visited it had the confidence, or the credulity, to assert, that "Europe could not boast a single city so fair and opulent as Mexico."[11]

The metropolis of our day would seem to stand in a different situation from that reared by the Conquerors ; for the waters no longer flow through its streets, nor wash the ample circumference of its walls. These waters have retreated within the diminished basin of Tezcuco ; and the causeways, which anciently traversed the depths of the lake, are not now to be distinguished from the other avenues to the capital. But the city, embellished, it is true, by the labors of successive viceroys, is substantially the same as in the days of the Conquerors ; and the massive grandeur of the few buildings that remain of the primitive period, and the general magnificence and symmetry of its plan, attest the far-sighted policy of its founder, which looked beyond the present to the wants of coming generations.

The attention of Cortés was not confined to the capital. He was careful to establish settlements in every part of the country which afforded a favorable position for them. He founded Zacatula on the shores of the miscalled Pacific, Coliman in the territory of Michuacan, San Estéban on the Atlantic coast, probably not far from the site of Tempico, Medellin (so called after his own birthplace) in the neighborhood of the modern Vera Cruz, and a port near the river Antigua, from which it derived its name. It was designed to take the place of Villa Rica, which, as experience had shown, from its exposed situation, afforded no protection to shipping against the winds that sweep over the Mexican Gulf. Antigua, sheltered within the recesses of a bay,

[10] Cortés, reckoning only the Indian population, says *trienta mil vecinos*. (Rel. Quarta, ap Lorenzana, p. 375.) Gomara, speaking of Mexico some years later, estimates the number of Spanish householders as in the text. Crónica, cap. 162.

[11] Toribio, Hist de los Indios, MS., Parte 3, cap. 7.

Yet this is scarcely stronger language than that of the Anonymous Conqueror; " Cosí ben ordinato et di si belle piazze et strade, quanto d' altre cittá che siano al mondo." Rel, d' un gent., ap. Ramusio, tom. III. foi. 309.

presented a more advantageous position. Cortés established there a board of trade, connected the settlement by a highway with the capital, and fondly predicted that his new city would become the great emporium of the country.[12] But in this he was mistaken. From some cause not very obvious, the port of entry was removed, at the close of the sixteenth century, to the modern Vera Cruz; which, without any superiority, probably, of topographical position, or even of salubrity of climate, has remained ever since the great commercial capital of New Spain.

Cortés stimulated the settlement of his several colonies by liberal grants of land and municipal privileges. The great difficulty was to induce women to reside in the country, and without them he felt that the colonies, like a tree without roots, must soon perish. By a singular provision he required every settler, if a married man, to bring over his wife within eighteen months on pain of forfeiting his estate. If he were too poor to do this himself, the government would assist him. Another law imposed the same penalty on all bachelors who did not provide themselves with wives within the same period! The general seems to have considered celibacy as too great a luxury for a young country.[13]

[12] "Y tengo por cierto, que aquel Pueblo ha de ser, despues de esta Ciudad, el mejor que obiere en esta Nueva España." (Rel. Quarta, ap. Lorenzana, p. 382.) The archbishop confounds this town with the modern Vera Cruz. But the general's description of the port refutes this supposition, and confirms our confidence in Clavigero's statement, that the present city was founded by the Conde de Monterey, at the time mentioned in the text. See Vol. I. p. 353, note.

[13] Ordenanzas Municipales, Tenochtitlan, Marzo, 1524, MS.

The Ordinances made by Cortés, for the government of the country during his viceroyalty, are still preserved in Mexico; and the copy in my possession was transmitted to me from that capital. They give ample evidence of the wise and penetrating spirit which embraced every object worthy of the attention of an enlightened ruler; and I will quote, in the original the singular provision mentioned in the text.

"Item. Por que mas se manifieste la voluntad que los pobladores de estas partes tienen de residir y permanecer en ellas, mando que todas las personas que tuvieren Indios, que fueren casados en Castilla ó en otras partes, que traigan sus mugeres dentro de un año y medio primero siguientes de como estas ordenanzas fueren pregonadas, so pena de perder los Indios, y todo lo con ellos adquirido é grangeado; y por que muchas personas podrian poner por achaque aunque tuviesen aparejo de decir que no tienen dineros para enviar por ellas, por hende las tales personas que tuvieran esta necesidad parescan ante el R°. Pe. Fray Juan de Teto y ante Alonso de Estrada, tesorero de su Magestad, á les informar de su necesidad, para que ellos la comuniquen á mí, y su necesidad se remedie; y si algunas personas hay que casados y no tienen sus mugeres en esta tierra, y quisieran traerlas, sepan que trayéndolas serán ayudadas así mismo para las traer, dando fianzas.

"Item. Por quanto en esta tierra hay muchas personas que tienen Indios

His own wife, Doña Catalina Xuarez, was among those who came over from the Islands to New Spain. According to Bernal Diaz, her coming gave him no particular satisfaction.[14] It is possible; since his marriage with her seems to have been entered into with reluctance, and her lowly condition and connections stood somewhat in the way of his future advancement. Yet they lived happily together for several years, according to the testimony of Las Casas;[15] and, whatever he may have felt, he had the generosity, or the prudence, not to betray his feelings to the world. On landing, Doña Catalina was escorted by Sandoval to the capital, where she was kindly received by her husband, and all the respect paid to her, to which she was entitled by her elevated rank. But the climate of the table-land was not suited to her constitution, and she died in three months after her arrival.[16] An event so auspicious to his worldly prospects did not fail, as we shall see hereafter, to provoke the tongue of scandal to the most malicious, but it is scarcely necessary to say, unfounded inferences.

In the distribution of the soil among the Conquerors, Cortés adopted the vicious system of *repartimientos*, universally practised among his countrymen. In a letter to the emperor, he states, that the superior capacity of the Indians in New Spain had made him regard it as a grievous thing to condemn them to servitude, as had been done in the Islands. But, on further trial, he had found the Spaniards so much harassed and impoverished, that they could not hope to maintain themselves in the land without enforcing the services of the natives, and for this reason he had at length waived his own scruples in compliance with their repeated remonstrances.[17] This was the wretched pretext used on the like occasions by his countrymen to cover up this flagrant act of injustice. The Crown, however, in its instructions to the general, disavowed the act and annulled the *repartimientos*.[18] It was all in vain. The necessities, or rather the cupidity, of the colonists easily evaded the royal ordinances.

de encomienda y no son casados, por hende por que conviene así para *la salud de sus conciencias de los tales* por estar en buen estado, como por la poblacion é noblecimiento de sus tierras, mando que las tales personas se casen, traigan y tengan sus mugeres en esta tierra dentro de un año y medio, despues que fueren pregonadas estas dichas Ordenanzas, é que no haciendo lo por el mismo caso sean privados y pierdan los tales Indios que así tienen."

[14] Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 160.

[15] Ante, Vol. I. p. 177.

[16] Of asthma, according to Bernal Diaz; (Hist. de la Conquista ubi supra;) but her death seems to have been too sudden to be attributed to that disease. I shall return to the subject hereafter.

[17] Rel. Terc., ap. Lorenzana, pp. 319, 320.

[18] Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 3, lib. 5, cap. I.

The colonial legislation of Spain shows, in the repetition of enactments against slavery, the perpetual struggle that subsisted between the Crown and the colonists, and the impotence of the former to enforce measures repugnant to the interests, at all events to the avarice, of the latter. New Spain furnishes no exception to the general fact.

The Tlascalans, in gratitude for their signal services, were exempted, at the recommendation of Cortés, from the doom of slavery. It should be added, that the general, in granting the *repartimientos*, made many humane regulations for limiting the power of the master, and for securing as many privileges to the natives as were compatible with any degree of compulsory service.[19] These limitations, it is true, were too often disregarded; and in the mining districts, in particular, the situation of the poor Indian was often deplorable. Yet the Indian population, clustering together in their own villages, and living under their own magistrates, have continued to prove by their numbers, fallen as these have below their primitive amount, how far superior was their condition to that in most other parts of the vast colonial empire of Spain.[20] This condition has been gradually ameliorated, under the influence of higher moral views and larger ideas of government; until the servile descendants of the ancient lords of the soil have been permitted, in republican Mexico, to rise—nominally, at least—to a level with the children of their conquerors.

Whatever disregard he may have shown to the political rights of the natives, Cortés manifested a commendable solicitude for their spiritual welfare. He requested the emperor to send out holy men to the country; not bishops and pampered prelates, who too often squandered the substance of the Church in riotous living, but godly persons, members of religious fraternities, whose lives might be a fitting commentary on their teaching. Thus only, he adds,—and the remark is worthy of note, can they exercise any influence over the natives, who have been accustomed to see the least departure from morals in their

[19] Ibid., dec. 4, lib. 6, cap. 5.—Ordenanzas, MS.
The ordinances prescribe the service of the Indians, the hours they may be employed, their food compensation, and the like. They require the *encomendero* to provide them with suitable means of religious instruction and places of worship.—But what avail good laws, which, in their very nature, imply the toleration of a great abuse?

[20] The whole population of New Spain, in 1810, is estimated by Don Francisca Navarro y Noriega at about 6,000,000; of which more than half were pure Indians. The author had the best means for arriving at a correct result. See Humboldt, Essai Politique, tom. I. pp. 318, 319, note.

own priesthood punished with the utmost rigor of the law.[21] In obedience to these suggestions twelve Franciscan friars embarked for New Spain, which they reached early in 1524. They were men of unblemished purity of life, nourished with the learning of the cloister, and like many others whom the Romish Church has sent forth on such apostolic missions, counted all personal sacrifices as little in the sacred cause to which they were devoted.[22]

The presence of the reverend fathers in the country was greeted with general rejoicing. The inhabitants of the towns through which they passed came out in a body to welcome them; processions were formed of the natives bearing wax tapers in their hands, and the bells of the churches rung out a joyous peal in honor of their arrival. Houses of refreshment were provided for them along their route to the capital; and, when they entered it, they were met by a brilliant cavalcade of the principal cavaliers and citizens, with Cortés at their head. The general, dismounting, and bending one knee to the ground, kissed the robes of father Martin of Valencia, the principal of the fraternity. The natives, filled with amazement at the viceroy's humiliation before men whose naked feet and tattered garments gave them the aspect of mendicants, henceforth regarded them as beings of a superior nature. The Indian chronicler of Tlascala does not conceal his admiration of this edifying condescension of Cortés, which he pronounces "one of the most heroical acts of his life!"[23]

The missionaries lost no time in the good work of conversion. They began their preaching through interpreters, until they had acquired a competent knowledge of the language themselves. They opened schools and founded colleges, in which the native

[21] Rel. Quarta, ap. Lorenzana, pp. 391–394.

The petition of the Conquerors was acceded to by government, which further prohibited "attorneys and men learned in the law from setting foot in the country, on the ground that experience had shown, they would be sure by their evil practices to disturb the peace of the community." (Herrea, Hist General, dec. 3, lib. 5, cap. 2.) These enactments are but an indifferent tribute to the character of the two professions in Castile.

[22] Toribio, Hist de los Indios, MS., Parte 1, cap. 1.—Camargo, Hist. de Tlascala, MS.

[23] "Cuyo hecho del rotísimo y humilde recebimiento fué uno de los heroicos hechos que este Capitan hizo, porque fué documento para que con mayor fervor los naturales desta tierra viniesen á la conversion de nuestra fee." (Camargo, Hist. de Tlascala, MS.—See also Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 171.) Archbishop Lorenzana falls nothing short of the Tlascalan historian in his admiration of the religious zeal of the great *Conquistador*, which, he assures us, "entirely overwhelms him, as savoring so much more of the apostolic missionary than of the soldier!" Lorenzana, p. 393, nota.

youth were instructed in profane as well as Christian learning. The ardor of the Indian neophyte emulated that of his teacher. In a few years every vestige of the primitive *teocallis* was effaced from the land. The uncouth idols of the country, and unhappily the hieroglyphical manuscripts, shared the same fate. Yet the missionary and the convert did much to repair these losses by their copious accounts of the Aztec institutions, collected from the most authentic sources.[24]

The business of conversion went on prosperously among the several tribes of the great Nahuatlac family. In about twenty years from the first advent of the missionaries, one of their body could make the pious vaunt, that nine millions of converts —a number probably exceeding the population of the country— had been admitted within the Christian fold![25] The Aztec worship was remarkable for its burdensome ceremonial, and prepared its votaries for the pomp and splendors of the Romish ritual. It was not difficult to pass from the fasts and festivals of the one religion to the fasts and festivals of the other; to transfer their homage from the fantastic idols of their own creation to the beautiful forms in sculpture and in painting which decorated the Christian cathedral. It is true, they could have comprehended little of the dogmas of their new faith, and little, it may be, of its vital spirit. But, if the philosopher may smile at the reflection, that conversion, under these circumstances, was one of form rather than of substance, the philanthropist will console himself by considering how much the cause of humanity and good morals must have gained by the substitution of these unsullied rites for the brutal abominations ot the Aztecs.

The Conquerors settled in such parts of the country as best suited their inclinations. Many occupied the south-eastern slopes of the Cordilleras towards the rich valley of Oaxaca. Many more spread themselves over the broad surface of the

[24] Toribio, Hist. de los Indios, MS., Parte 3, cap. 1.

Father Sahagun, who has done better service in this way than any other of his order, describes with simple brevity the rapid process of demolition. "We took the children of the caciques," he says, "into our schools, where we taught them to read, write, and to chant. The children of the poorer natives were brought together in the court-yard, and instructed there in the Christian faith. After our teaching, one or two brethren took the pupils to some neighboring *teocalli*, and, by working at it for a few days, they levelled it to the ground. In this way they demolished, in a short time, all the Aztec temples, great and small, *so that not a vestige of them remained.*" (Hist de Nueva España tom. III. p. 77.) This passage helps to explain why so few architectural relics of the Indian era still survive in Mexico.

[25] "De manera que á mi juicio y verdaderamente serán bautizados en este tiempo que digo, que serán quince años, mas de nueve millones de animas de Indios." Toribio, Hist. de los Indios, MS., Parte 2, cap. 3.

table-land, which, from its elevated position, reminded them of the plateau of their own Castile. Here, too, they were in the range of those inexhaustible mines which have since poured their silver deluge over Europe. The mineral resources of the land were not, indeed, fully explored or comprehended till at a much later period; but some few, as the mines of Zacatecas, Guanuaxato, and Tasco,—the last of which was also known in Montezuma's time,—had begun to be wrought within a generation after the Conquest.[26]

But the best wealth of the first settlers was in the vegetable products of the soil, whether indigenous, or introduced from abroad by the wise economy of Cortés. He had earnestly recommended the Crown to require all vessels coming to the country to bring over a certain quantity of seeds and plants.[27] He made it a condition of the grants of land on the plateau, that the proprietor of every estate should plant a specified number of vines in it.[28] He further stipulated, that no one should get a clear title to his estate until he had occupied it eight years.[29] He knew that permanent residence could alone create that interest in the soil, which would lead to its efficient culture; and that the opposite system had caused the impoverishment of the best plantations in the Islands. His various regulations, some of them not a little distasteful to the colonists, augmented the agricultural resources of the country by the addition of the most important European grains and other vegetables, for which the diversified climate of New Spain was admirably adapted. The sugar-cane was transplanted from the neighboring islands to the lower level of the country, and, together with indigo, cotton, and cochineal, formed a more desirable staple for the colony than its precious metals. Under the sun of the tropics, the peach, the almond, the orange, the vine, and the olive, before unknown there, flourished in the gardens of the table-land, at an elevation twice as great, as that at which the clouds are suspended in summer above our heads. The importation of a European fruit or vege-

[26] Clavigero, Stor. del Messico, tom. I. p. 43.—Humboldt, Essai Politique, tom. III. pp. 115, 145.—Esposicion de Don Lúcas Alaman, (México, 1828,) p. 59.

[27] "Paraque cada Navío traiga cierta cantidad de Plantas, y que no pueda salir sin ellas, porque será mucha causa para la Poblacion, y perpetuacion de ella." Rel. Quarta de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p. 397.

[28] "Item, que cualquier vesino que tubiere Indios de repartimiento sea obligado á poner en ellos en cada un año con cada cien Indios de los que tuvieren de repartimiento mil sarmientos, ensogiendo la mejor que pudiese hallar." Ordenanzas Municipales, año de 1524, MS.

[29] Ordenanzas Municipales, año de 1524, MS.

table was hailed by the simple colonists with delight. The first produce of the exotic was celebrated by a festival, and the guests greeted each other, as on the appearance of an old familiar friend, who called up the remembrance of the past, and the tender associations of their native land.

While thus occupied with the internal economy of the country, Cortés was still bent on his great schemes of discovery and conquest. In the preceding Chapter we have seen him fitting out a little fleet at Zacatula, to explore the shores of the Pacific. It was burnt in the dock-yard, when nearly completed. This was a serious calamity, as most of the materials were to be transported across the country from Villa Rica. Cortés, however, with his usual promptness, took measures to repair the loss. He writes to the emperor, that another squadron will soon be got ready at the same port, and, "he doubts not, will put his Majesty in possession of more lands and kingdoms, than the nation has ever heard of!"[30] This magnificent vaunt shows the common sentiment of the Spaniards at that time, who looked on the Pacific as the famed Indian Ocean, studded with golden islands, and teeming with the rich treasures of the East.

A principal object of this squadron was the discovery of a strait which should connect the Atlantic with the Pacific. Another squadron, consisting of five vessels, was fitted out in the Gulf of Mexico, to take the direction of Florida, with the same view of detecting a strait. For Cortés trusted—we, at this day, may smile at the illusion—that one might be found in that direction, which should conduct the navigator to those waters which had been traversed by the keels of Magellan![31]

The discovery of a strait was the great object to which nautical enterprise in that day was directed, as it had been ever since the time of Columbus. It was in the sixteenth century what the discovery of the North-west passage has been in our own age; the great *ignis fatuus* of navigators. The vast extent of the American continent had been ascertained by the voyages of Cabot in the North, and of Magellan very recently in the South. The proximity, in certain quarters, of the two great oceans that washed its eastern and western shores had been settled by the discoveries both of Balboa and of Cortés.

[30] "Tengo de ser causa, que Vuestra Cesarea Magestad sea en estas partes Señor de mas Reynos, Señoríos que los que hasta hoy en nuestra Nacion se tiene noticia." Rel. Quarta de Cortés, ap. Lorenzana, p, 374.

[31] "Much as I esteem Hernando Cortés," exclaims Oviedo, "for the greatest captain and most practised in military matters of any we have known, I think such an opinion shows he was no great cosmographer." (Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 41.) Oviedo had lived to see its fallacy.

European scholars could not believe, that Nature had worked on a plan so repugnant, apparently, to the interests of humanity, as to interpose, through the whole length of the great continent, such a barrier to communication between the adjacent waters. The correspondence of men of science,[32] the instructions of the Court, the letters of Cortés, like those of Columbus, touch frequently on this favorite topic. "Your Majesty may be assured," he writes, "that, as I know how much you have at heart the discovery of *this great secret of a strait*, I shall postpone all interests and projects of my own, some of them of the highest moment, for the fulfilment of this great object."[33]

It was partly with the same view, that the general caused a considerable armament to be equipped and placed under the command of Christóval de Olid, the brave officer, who, as the reader will remember, had charge of one of the great divisions of the besieging army. He was to steer for Honduras, and plant a colony on its northern coast. A detachment of Olid's squadron was afterwards to cruise along its southern shore towards Darien in search of the mysterious strait. The country was reported to be full of gold; so full, that "the fishermen used gold weights for their nets." The life of the Spanish discoverers was one long day-dream. Illusion after illusion chased one another like the bubbles which the child throws off from his pipe, as bright, as beautiful, and as empty. They lived in a world of enchantment.[34]

Together with these maritime expeditions Cortés fitted out a powerful expedition by land. It was intrusted to Alvarado, who, with a large force of Spaniards and Indians, was to descend the southern slant of the Cordilleras, and penetrate into the countries that lay beyond the rich valley of Oaxaca. The campaigns of this bold and rapacious chief terminated in the important conquest of Guatemala. The general required his captains to send him minute accounts of the countries which they visited, the productions of the soil, and their general resources. The result was several valuable and interesting communications.[35] In his

[32] Martyr, Opus Epist., ep. 811.

[33] Rel. Quarta, ap. Lorenzana, p. 385.

[34] The illusion at home was kept up, in some measure, by the dazzling display of gold and jewels remitted from time to time, wrought into fanciful and often fantastic forms. One of the articles sent home by Cortés was a piece of ordnance, made of gold and silver, of very fine workmanship, the metal of which alone cost 25,500 *pesos de oro*. Oviedo who saw it in the palace, speaks with admiration of this magnificent toy. Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 41.

[35] Among these may be particularly mentioned the Letters of Alvarado and Diego de Godoy, transcribed by Oviedo in his Hist. de las Ind., MS.

instructions for the conduct of these expeditions, he enjoined a considerate treatment of the natives, and inculcated a policy which may be called humane, as far as humanity is compatible with a system of subjugation.[36] Unfortunately, the character of his officers too often rendered these instructions unavailing.

In the prosecution of his great enterprises, Cortés, within three short years after the Conquest, had reduced under the dominion of Castile an extent of country more than four hundred leagues in length, as he affirms, on the Atlantic coast, and more than five hundred on the Pacific; and, with the exception of a few interior provinces of no great importance, had brought them to a condition of entire tranquility.[37] In accomplishing this, he had freely expended the revenues of the Crown, drawn from tributes similar to those which had been anciently paid by the natives to their own sovereigns; and he had, moreover, incurred a large debt on his own account, for which he demanded remuneration from government. The celebrity of his name, and the dazzling reports of the conquered countries, drew crowds of adventurers to New Spain, who furnished the general with recruits for his various enterprises.

Whoever would form a just estimate of this remarkable man must not confine himself to the history of the Conquest. His military career, indeed, places him on a level with the greatest captains of his age. But the period subsequent to the Conquest affords different, and in some respects nobler, points of view for the study of his character. For we then see him devising a system of government for the motley and antagonist races, so to speak, now first brought under a common dominion; repairing the mischiefs of war; and employing his efforts to detect the latent resources of the country, and to stimulate it to its highest power of production. The narrative may seem tame, after the recital of exploits as bold and adventurous as those of a paladin of romance. But it is only by the perusal of this narative, that we can form an adequate conception of the acute and comprehensive genius of Cortés.

(lib. 33, cap. 42—44,) and translated by Ramusio, for his rich collection, Viaggi, tom. III.

[36] See, among others, his orders to his kinsman, Francis Cortés,—"Instruccion Civil y Militar por la Expedicion de la Costa pe Colima." The paper is dated in 1524, and forms part of the Muñoz collection of MSS.

[37] Rel. Quarta, ap. Lorenzana, p. 371.

"Well may we wonder," exclaims his archiepiscopal editor, "that Cortés and his soldiers could have overrun and subdued, in so short a time, countries, many of them so rough and difficult of access, that, even at the present day, we can hardly penetrate them!" Ibid., nota.

CHAPTER III.

DEFECTION OF OLID.—DREADFUL MARCH TO HONDURAS.—EXECUTION OF GUATEMOZIN.—DONA MARINA.—ARRIVAL AT HONDURAS.

1524—1526.

IN the last Chapter we have seen that Christóval de Olid was sent by Cortés to plant a colony in Honduras. The expedition was attended with consequences which had not been foreseen. Made giddy by the possession of power, Olid, when he had reached his place of destination, determined to assert an independent jurisdiction for himself. His distance from Mexico, he flattered himself, might enable him to do so with impunity. He misunderstood the character of Cortés, when he supposed that any distance would be great enough to shield a rebel from his vengeance.

It was long before the general received tidings of Olid's defection. But no sooner was he satisfied of this, than he despatched to Honduras a trusty captain and kinsman, Francisco de las Casas, with directions to arrest his disobedient officer. Las Casas was wrecked on the coast, and fell into Olid's hands; but eventually succeeded in raising an insurrection in the settlement, seized the person of Olid, and beheaded that unhappy delinquent in the market-place of Naco.[1]

Of these proceedings, Cortés learned only what related to the shipwreck of his lieutenant. He saw all the mischievous consequences that must arise from Olid's example, especially if his defection were to go unpunished. He determined to take the affair into his own hands, and to lead an expedition in person to Honduras. He would thus, moreover, be enabled to ascertain from personal inspection the resources of the country, which were reputed great on the score of mineral wealth; and would perhaps, detect the point of communication between the great oceans, which had so long eluded the efforts of the Spanish discoverers. He was still further urged to this step by the un-

[1] Carta Quinta de Cortés, MS.

comfortable position in which he had found himself of late in the capital. Several functionaries had recently been sent from the mother country for the ostensible purpose of administering the colonial revenues. But they served as spies on the general's conduct, caused him many petty annoyances, and sent back to court the most malicious reports of his purposes and proceedings. Cortés, in short, now that he was made Governor-General of the country, had less real power than when he held no legal commission at all.

The Spanish force which he took with him did not probably exceed a hundred horse and forty or perhaps fifty foot; to which were added about three thousand Indian auxiliaries.[2] Among them were Guatemozin and the cacique of Tacuba, with a few others of highest rank, whose consideration with their countrymen would make them an obvious nucleus, round which disaffection might gather. The general's personal retinue consisted of several pages, young men of good family, and among them Montejo, the future conqueror of Yucatan; a butler and steward; several musicians, dancers, jugglers, and buffoons, showing, it might seem, more of the effeminacy of an Oriental satrap, than the hardy valor of a Spanish cavalier.[3] Yet the imputation of effeminacy is sufficiently disproved by the terrible march which he accomplished.

On the 12th of October, 1524, Cortés commenced his march. As he descended the sides of the Cordilleras, he was met by many of his old companions in arms, who greeted their commander with a hearty welcome, and some of them left their estates to join the expedition.[4] He halted in the province of Coatzacualco, (Huasacualco,) until he could receive intelligence respecting his route from the natives of Tabasco. They furnished him with a map, exhibiting the principal places whither the Indian traders, who wandered over these wild regions, were in the habit of resorting. With the aid of this map, a compass and such guides as from time to time he could pick up on his journey, he proposed to traverse that broad and level tract which forms the basis of Yucatan, and spreads from the Coatzacualco river to the head of the Gulf of Honduras. "I shall give your

[2] Carto de Albornos, MS., Mexico, Dec. 15, 1525.—Carta Quinta de Cortés, MS.

The authorities do not precisely agree as to the numbers which were changing, probably, with every step of their march across the table-land.

[3] Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 174.

[4] Among these was Captain Diaz, who, however, left the pleasant farm, which he occupied in the province of Coatzacualco, with a very ill grace, to accompany the expedition. "But Cortés commanded it, and we dared not say no," says the veteran. Ibid., cap. 175.

Majesty," he begins his celebrated Letter to the Emperor, describing this expedition, "an account, as usual, of the most remarkable events of my journey, every one of which might form the subject of a separate narration." Cortés did not exaggerate.[5]

The beginning of the march lay across a low and marshy level, intersected by numerous little streams, which form the head waters of the *Rio de Tabasco*, and of the other rivers that discharge themselves, to the north, into the Mexican Gulf. The smaller streams they forded, or passed in canoes, suffering their horses to swim across as they held them by the bridle. Rivers of more formidable size they crossed on floating bridges. It gives one some idea of the difficulties they had to encounter in this way, when it is stated, that the Spaniards were obliged to construct no less than fifty of these bridges in a distance of less than one hundred miles![6] One of them was more than nine hundred paces in length. Their troubles were much augmented by the difficulty of obtaining subsistence, as the natives frequently set fire to the villages on their approach, leaving to the way-worn adventurers only a pile of smoking ruins.

It would be useless to encumber the page with the names of Indian towns which lay in the route of the army, but which may be now obselete, and, at all events, have never found their way into a map of the country.[7] The first considerable place which they reached was Iztapan, pleasantly situated in the midst of a fruitful region, on the banks of one of the tributaries of the Rio de Tabasco. Such was the extremity to which the Spaniards

This celebrated Letter, which has never been published, is usually designated as the *Carta Quinta*, or "Fifth Letter," of Cortés. It is nearly as long as the longest of the printed letters of the Conqueror, is written in the same clear, simple, business-like manner, and is as full of interest as any of the preceding. It gives a minute account of the expedition to Honduras, together with events that occurred in the year following. It bears no date, but was probably written in that year from Mexico. The original manuscript is in the Imperial Library at Vienna, which, as the German sceptre was swayed at that time by the same hand which held the Castilian, contains many documents of value for the illustration of Spanish history.

[6] "Es tierra mui baja y de muchas sienegas, tanto que en tiempo de invierno no se puede andar, ni se sirve sino en canoas, y con pasarla yo en tiempo de seca, desde la entrada hasta la salida de ella, que puede aver veinti leguas, se hiziéron mas de cinquenta, puentes, que sin se hazer, fuera imposible pasar. Carta Quinta de Cortés, MS.

[7] I have examined some of the most ancient maps of the country, by Spanish, French, and Dutch cosmographers, in order to determine the route of Cortés. An inestimable collection of these maps, made by the learned German, Ebeling, is to be found in the library of Harvard University. I can detect on them only four or five of the places indicated by the general. They are the places mentioned in the text, and, though few, may serve to show the general direction of the march of the army.

had already, in the course of a few weeks, been reduced by hunger and fatigue, that the sight of a village in these dreary solitudes was welcomed by his followers, says Cortés, "with a shout of joy that was echoed back from all the surrounding woods." The army was now at no great distance from the ancient city of Palenque, the subject of so much speculation in our time. The village of *Las Tres Cruzes*, indeed, situated between twenty and thirty miles from Palenque, is said still to commemorate the passage of the Conquerors by the existence of three crosses which they left there. Yet no allusion is made to the ancient capital. Was it then the abode of a populous and flourishing community, such as once occupied it, to judge from the extent and magnificence of its remains? Or was it, even then, a heap of mouldering ruins, buried in a wilderness of vegetation, and thus hidden from the knowledge of the surrounding country? If the former, the silence of Cortés is not easy to be explained.

On quitting Iztapan, the Spaniards struck across a country having the same character of a low and marshy soil, checkered by occasional patches of cultivation, and covered with forests of cedar and Brazil wood, which seemed absolutely interminable. The overhanging foliage threw so deep a shade, that, as Cortés says, the soldiers could not see where to set their feet.[8] To add to their perplexity, their guides deserted them; and, when they climbed to the summits of the tallest trees, they could see only the same cheerless, interminable line of waving woods. The compass and the map furnished the only clue to extricate them from this gloomy labyrinth; and Cortés and his officers, among whom was the constant Sandoval, spreading out their chart on the ground, anxiously studied the probable direction of their route. Their scanty supplies meanwhile had entirely failed them, and they appeased the cravings of appetite by such roots as they dug out of the earth, or by the nuts and berries that grew wild in the woods. Numbers fell sick, and many of the Indians sank by the way, and died of absolute starvation.

When, at length, the troops emerged from these dismal forests, their path was crossed by a river of great depth, and far wider than any which they had hitherto traversed. The soldiers, disheartened, broke out into murmurs against their leader, who was plunging them deeper and deeper in a boundless wilderness, where they must lay their bones. It was in vain that Cor-

[8] "Donde se ponian los pies en el suelo açia arriba la claridad del cielo no se veia, tanta era la espesura y alteza de los árboles, que aunque se subian en algunos, no podian descubrir un tiro de piedra." Carta Quinta de Cortés, MS.

tés encouraged them to construct a floating bridge, which might take them to the opposite bank of the river. It seemed a work of appalling magnitude, to which their wasted strength was unequal. He was more successful in his appeal to the Indian auxiliaries, till his own men, put to shame by the ready obedience of the latter, engaged in the work with a hearty good-will, which enabled them, although ready to drop from fatigue, to accomplish it at the end of four days. It was, indeed, the only expedient by which they could hope to extricate themselves from their perilous situation. The bridge consisted of one thousand pieces of timber, each of the thickness of a man's body and full sixty feet long.[9] When we consider that the timber was all standing in the forest at the commencement of the labor, it must be admitted to have been an achievement worthy of the Spaniards. The well-compacted beams presented a solid structure, which nothing, says Cortés, but fire could destroy. It excited the admiration of the natives, who came a great distance to see it; and "the bridge of Cortés" remained for many a year the enduring monument of that commander's energy and perseverance.

The arrival of the army on the opposite bank of the river involved them in new difficulties. The ground was so soft and saturated with water, that the horses floundered up to their girths, and, sometimes plunging into quagmires, were nearly buried in the mud. It was with the greatest difficulty that they could be extricated by covering the wet soil with the foliage and the boughs of trees, when a stream of water, which forced its way through the heart of the morass, furnished the jaded animals with the means of effecting their escape by swimming.[10] As the Spaniards emerged from these slimy depths, they came on a broad and rising ground, which, by its cultivated fields teeming with maize, *agi*, or pepper of the country, and the *yuca* plant, intimated their approach to the capital of the fruitful province

[9] "Porque lleva mas que mil bigas, que la menor es casi tan gorda como un cuerpo de un hombre, y de nueve y diez brazas en largo." Carta Quinta de Cortés, MS.

[10] "Pasada toda la gente y cavallos de la otra parte del alcon dimos luego en una gran çienega, que durava bien tres tiros de ballesta, la cosa mas espantosa que jamas las gentes viéron, donde todos los cavallos desençillados se sumiéron hasta las orejas sin pareçerse otra cosa, y querer forcejar á salir, sumianse mas, de manera que allí perdímos toda la esperanza de poder escapar cavallos ningunos, pero todavía comenzámos á trabajar y componerles haçes de yerba ramas grandes de bajo, sobre que se sostuviesen y no se sumiesen, remedi vanse algo, y andando trabajando y yendo y viniendo de la una parte á la otra, abrióse por medio de un calejon de agua y çieno, que los cavallos comenzáron algo á nadar, y con esto plugo á nuestro Señor que saliéron todos sin peligro ninguno." Carta Quinta de Cortés, MS.

of Aculan. It was in the beginning of Lent, 1525, a period memorable for an event of which I shall give the particulars from the narrative of Cortés.

The general at this place was informed by one of the Indian converts in his train, that a conspiracy had been set on foot by Guatemozin, with the cacique of Tacuba, and some other of the principal Indian nobles, to massacre the Spaniards. They would seize the moment when the army should be entangled in the passage of some defile, or some frightful morass like that from which it had just escaped, where, taken at disadvantage, it could be easily overpowered by the superior number of the Mexicans. After the slaughter of the troops, the Indians would continue their march to Honduras, and cut off the Spanish settlements there. Their success would lead to a rising in the capital, and, indeed, throughout the land, until every Spaniard should be exterminated, and the vessels in the ports be seized, and secured from carrying the tidings across the waters.

No sooner had Cortés learned the particulars of this formidable plot, than he arrested Guatemozin and the principal Aztec lords in his train. The latter admitted the fact of the conspiracy, but alleged that it had been planned by Guatemozin, and that they had refused to come into it. Guatemozin and the chief of Tacuba neither admitted nor denied the truth of the accusation, but maintained a dogged silence. Such is the statement of Cortés.[11] Bernal Diaz, however, who was present in the expedition, assures us, that both Guatemozin and the cacique of Tacuba avowed their innocence. They had, indeed, they said, talked more than once together of the sufferings they were then enduring, and had said, that death was preferable to seeing so many of their poor followers dying daily around them. They admitted, also, that a project for rising on the Spaniards had been discussed by some of the Aztecs; but Guatemozin had discouraged it from the first, and no scheme of the kind could have been put into execution without his knowledge and consent.[12] These protestations did not avail the unfortunate princes; and Cortés having satisfied, or affected to satisfy, himself of their guilt, ordered them to immediate execution.

When brought to the fatal tree, Guatemozin displayed the intrepid spirit worthy of his better days. "I knew what it was," said he, "to trust to your false promises, Malinche; I knew that you had destined me to this fate, since I did not fall by my own hand when you entered my city of Tenochtitlan. Why do you slay me

[11] Carta Quinta de Cortés, MS.
[12] Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 177.

so unjustly? God will demand it of you!"[13] The cacique of Tacuba, protesting his innocence, declared, that he desired no better lot than to die by the side of his lord. The unfortunate princes, with one or more inferior nobles, (for the number is uncertain,) were then executed by being hung from the huge branches of a *ceiba* tree, which overshadowed the road.[14]

Such was the sad end of Guatemozin, the last emperor of the Aztecs, if we might not rather call him "the last of the Aztecs"; since, from this time, broken in spirit and without a head, the remnant of the nation resigned itself, almost without a struggle, to the stern yoke of its oppressors. Among all the names of barbarian princes, there are few entitled to a higher place on the roll of fame than that of Guatemozin. He was young, and his public career was not long; but it was glorious. He was called to the throne in the convulsed and expiring hours of the monarchy, when the banded nations of Anahuac and the fierce European were thundering at the gates of the capital. It was a post of tremendous responsibility; but Guatemozin's conduct fully justified the choice of him to fill it. No one can refuse his admiration to the intrepid spirit which could prolong a defence of his city, while one stone was left upon another; and our sympathies, for the time, are inevitably thrown more into the scale of the rude chieftain, thus battling for his country's freedom, than into that of his civilized and successful antagonist.[15]

In reviewing the circumstances of Guatemozin's death, one cannot attach much weight to the charge of conspiracy brought against him. That the Indians, brooding over their wrongs and present sufferings, should have sometimes talked of revenge would not be surprising. But that any chimerical scheme of an insurrection, like that above mentioned, should have been set on

[13] Ibid., ubi supra.

[14] According to Diaz, both Guatemozin and the prince of Tacuba had embraced the religion of their conquerors, and were confessed by a Franciscan friar before their execution. We are further assured by the same authority, that "they were, *for Indians*, very good Christians, and believed well and truly." (Ibid., loc. cit.) One is reminded of the last hours of Caupolican, converted to Christianity by the same men who tied him to the stake. See the scene, painted in the frightful coloring of a master hand, in the Araucana, Canto 34.

[15] Guatemozin's beautiful wife, the princess Tecuichpo, the daughter of Montezuma, lived long enough after his death to give her hand to three Castilians, all of noble descent. (See Ante, Vol. II. p. 81, note 36.) She is described as having been as well instructed in the Catholic faith as any woman in Castile, as most gracious and winning in her deportment, and as having contributed greatly, by her example, and the deference with which she inspired the Aztecs, to the tranquillity of the conquered country. — This pleasing portrait, it may be well enough to mention, is by the hand of her husband, Don Thoan Cano. See *Appendix*, *Part* 2, *No.* 11.

foot, or even sanctioned by Guatemozin, is altogether improbable. That prince's explanation of the affair, as given by Diaz, is, to say the least, quite as deserving of credit as the accusation of the Indian informer.[16] The defect of testimony and the distance of time make it difficult for us, at the present day, to decide the question. We have a surer criterion of the truth in the opinion of those who were eye witnesses of the transaction. It is given in the words of the old chronicler, so often quoted. "The execution of Guatemozin," says Diaz, "was most unjust; and was thought wrong by all of us."[17]

The most probable explanation of the affair seems to be, that Guatemozin was a troublesome and, indeed, formidable captive. Thus much is intimated by Cortés himself, in his Letter to the emperor.[18] The fallen sovereign of Mexico, by the ascendency of his character, as well as by his previous station, maintained an influence over his countrymen, which would have enabled him with a breath, as it were, to rouse their smothered, not extinguished, animosity into rebellion. The Spaniards, during the first years after the Conquest, lived in constant apprehension of a rising of the Aztecs. This is evident from numerous passages in the writings of the time. It was under the same apprehension, that Cortés consented to embarrass himself with his royal captive on this dreary expedition. And in such distrust did he hold him, that, even while in Mexico, he neither rode abroad, nor walked to any great distance, according to Gomara, without being attended by Guatemozin.[19]

Parties standing in such relations to each other could have been the objects only of mutual distrust and aversion. The forlorn condition of the Spaniards on the present march, which exposed them, in a peculiar degree, to any sudden assault from their wily Indian vassals, increased the suspicions of Cortés. Thus predisposed to think ill of Guatemozin, the general lent

[16] The Indian chroniclers regard the pretended conspiracy of Guatemozin as an invention of Cortés. The informer himself, when afterwards put to the torture by the cacique of Tezcuco, declared that he had made no revelation of this nature to the Spanish commander. Ixtlilxochitl vouches for the truth of this story. (Venida de los Esp., pp. 83–93.) But who will vouch for Ixtlixochitl?

[17] "Y fué esta muerte que les diéron muy injustamente dada, y pareció mal á todos los que ibamos aquella jornado." Hist de la Conquista, cap. 177.

[18] "Guatemazin, Señor que fué de esta Ciudad de Temixtitan, á quien yo despues que la gané he tenido siempre preso, teniéndole per hombre bullicioso, y le llevé conmigo." Carta Quinta, MS.

[19] "Y le hacian aquella mesma reverencia, i ceremonias, que á Motecçuma, i creo que por eso le llevaba siempre consigo por la Ciudad á Caballo, si cavalgaba, i sino á pie como él iba." Crónica, cap. 170.

a ready ear to the first accusation against him. Charges were converted into proofs, and condemnation followed close upon the charges. By a single blow he proposed to rid himself and the state forever of a dangerous enemy,—the more dangerous, that he was an enemy in disguise. Had he but consulted his own honor and his good name, Guatemozin's head should have been the last on which he should have suffered an injury to fall. "He should have cherished him," to borrow the homely simile of his encomiast, Gomara, "like gold in a napkin, as the best trophy of his victories."[20]

Whatever may have been the real motives of his conduct in this affair, it seems to have left the mind of Cortés but ill at ease. For a long time he was moody and irritable, and found it difficult to sleep at night. On one occasion, as he was pacing an upper chamber of a *teocalli* in which he was quartered, he missed his footing in the dark, and was precipitated from a height of some twelve feet to the ground, which occasioned him a severe contusion on the head,—a thing too palpable to be concealed, though he endeavored, says the gossiping Diaz, to hide the knowledge of it, as well as he could, from the soldiers.[21]

It was not long after the sad scene of Guatemozin's execution, that the wearied troops entered the head town of the great province of Aculan; a thriving community of traders, who carried on a profitable traffic with the furthest quarters of Central America. Cortés notices in general terms the excellence and beauty of the buildings, and the hospitable reception which he experienced from the inhabitants.

After renewing their strength in these comfortable quarters, the Spaniards left the capital of Aculan, the name of which is to be found on no map, and held on their toilsome way in the direction of what is now called the Lake of Peten. It was then the property of an emigrant tribe of the hardy Maya family, and their capital stood on an island in the lake, "with its houses and lofty *teocallis* glistening in the sun," says Bernal Diaz, "so that it might be seen for the distance of two leagues."[22] These edifices, built by one of the races of Yucatan, displayed, doubtless, the same peculiarities of construction as the remains still to be seen in that remarkable peninsula. But, whatever may have been their architectural merits, they are disposed of in a brief sentence by the Conquerors.

The inhabitants of the island showed a friendly spirit, and a

[20] "I Cortés debiera guardarlo vivo, como Oro en paño que era el triumpho gloria de sus Victorias." Crónica, cap. 170.
[21] Hist. de la Conquista, ubi supra.
[22] Ibid., cap. 178.

docility unlike the warlike temper of their countrymen of Yucatan. They willingly listened to the Spanish missionaries who accompanied the expedition, as they expounded the Christian doctrines through the intervention of Marina. The Indian interpreter was present throughout this long march, the last in which she remained at the side of Cortés. As this, too, is the last occasion on which she will appear in these pages, I will mention, before parting with her, an interesting circumstance that occurred when the army was traversing the province of Coatzacualco. This, it may be remembered, was the native country of Marina, where her infamous mother sold her, when a child, to some foreign traders, in order to secure her inheritance to a younger brother. Cortés halted for some days at this place, to hold a conference with the surrounding caciques, on matters of government and religion. Among those summoned to this meeting was Marina's mother, who came, attended by her son. No sooner did they make their appearance, than all were struck with the great resemblance of the cacique to her daughter. The two parties recognized each other, though they had not met since their separation. The mother, greatly terrified, fancied that she had been decoyed into a snare, in order to punish her inhuman conduct. But Marina instantly ran up to her, and endeavored to allay her fears, assuring her that she should receive no harm, and, addressing the by-standers, said, "that she was sure her mother knew not what she did, when she sold her to the traders, and that she forgave her." Then tenderly embracing her unnatural parent, she gave her such jewels and other little ornaments as she wore about her own person, to win back, as it would seem, her lost affection. Marina added, that "she felt much happier than before, now that she had been instructed in the Christian faith, and given up the bloody worship of the Aztecs." [23]

In the course of the expedition to Honduras, Cortés gave Marina away to a Castilian knight, Don Juan Xamarillo, to whom she was wedded as his lawful wife. She had estates assigned to her in her native province, where she probably passed the remainder of her days. From this time, the name of Marina disappears from the page of history. But it has been always held in grateful remembrance by the Spaniards, for the important aid which she gave them in effecting the Conquest, and by the natives, for the kindness and sympathy which she showed them in their misfortunes. Many an Indian ballad commemo-

[23] Diaz, who was present, attests the truth of this account by the most solemn adjuration. "Y todo esto que digo, se lo oí muy certificadamente y se lo juro, amen." Ibid., cap. 37.

rates the gentle virtues of Malinche,—her Aztec epithet, Even now her spirit, if report be true, watches over the capital which she helped to win; and the peasant is occasionally startled by the apparition of an Indian princess, dimly seen through the evening shadows, as it flits among the groves and grottos of the royal Hill of Chapoltepec.[24]

By the Conqueror, Marina left one son, Don Martin Cortés. He rose to high consideration, and was made a *comendador* of the order of St. Jago. He was subsequently suspected of treasonable designs against the government; and neither his parents' extraordinary services, nor his own deserts, could protect him from a cruel persecution; and in 1568, the son of Hernando Cortés was shamefully subjected to the torture in the very capital which his father had acquired for the Castilian Crown!

The inhabitants of the isles of Peten—to return from our digression—listened attentively to the preaching of the Franciscan friars, and consented to the instant demolition of their idols, and the erection of the Cross upon their ruins.[25] A singular circumstance showed the value of these hurried conversions. Cortés, on his departure, left among this friendly people one of his horses, who had been disabled by an injury in the foot. The Indians felt a reverence for the animal, as in some way connected with the mysterious power of the white men. When their visitors had gone, they offered flowers to the horse, and, as it is said, prepared for him many savory messes of poultry, such as they would have administered to their own sick. Under this extraordinary diet the poor animal pined away and died. The affrighted Indians raised his effigy in stone, and, placing it in one of their *teocallis*, did homage to it, as to a deity. In 1618, when two Franciscan friars came to preach the Gospel in these regions, then scarcely better known to the Spaniards than before the time of Cortés, one of the most remarkable objects which they found was this statue of a horse, receiving the homage of the Indian worshippers, as the god of thunder and lightning![26]

It would be wearisome to recount all the perils and hardships endured by the Spaniards in the remainder of their journey. It would be repeating only the incidents of the preceding narrative;

[24] Life in Mexico, let. 8. The fair author does not pretend to have been favored with a sight of the apparition.

[25] Villagutierre says, that the Iztacs, by which name the inhabitants of these islands were called, did not destroy their idols while the Spaniards remained there. (Historia de la Conquista de la Provincia de el Itza, (Madrid, 1701,) pp. 49, 50.) The historian is wrong, since Cortés expressly asserts, that the images were broken and burnt in his presence. Carta Quinta, MS.

[26] The fact is recorded by Villagutierre, Conquista de el Itza, pp. 100-102, and Cojullado, Hist. de Yucathan, lib. 1, cap. 16.

the same obstacles in their path, the same extremities of famine and fatigue,—hardships more wearing on the spirits than encounters with an enemy, which, if more hazardous, are also more exciting. It is easier to contend with man than with Nature. Yet I must not omit to mention the passage of the *Sierra de los Pedernales*, "the Mountain of Flints," which, though only twenty-four miles in extent, consumed no less than twelve days in crossing it! The sharp stones cut the horses' feet to pieces, while many were lost down the precipices and ravines; so that, when they had reached the opposite side, sixty-eight of these valuable animals had perished, and the remainder were, for the most part, in an unserviceable condition![27]

The rainy season had now set in, and torrents of water, falling day and night, drenched the adventurers to the skin, and added greatly to their distresses. The rivers, swollen beyond their usual volume, poured along with a terrible impetuosity that defied the construction of bridges; and it was with the greatest difficulty, that, by laying trunks of trees from one huge rock to another, with which these streams were studded, they effected a perilous passage to the opposite banks.[28]

At length the shattered train drew near the Golfo Dolce, at the head of the Bay of Honduras. Their route could not have been far from the site of Copan, the celebrated city whose architectural ruins have furnished such noble illustrations for the pencil of Catherwood. But the Spaniards passed on in silence. Nor, indeed, can we wonder, that, at this stage of the enterprise, they should have passed on without heeding the vicinity of a city in the wilderness, though it were as glorious as the capital of Zenobia; for they were arrived almost within view of the Spanish settlements, the object of their long and wearisome pilgrimage.

The place which they were now approaching was Naco, or San Gil de Buena Vista, a Spanish settlement on the Golfo Dolce. Cortés advanced cautiously, prepared to fall on the town by surprise. He had held on his way with the undeviating step of the North American Indian, who, traversing morass and mountain and the most intricate forests, guided by the instinct of revenge,

[27] "Y querer dezir la aspereza y fragosidad de este Puerto y sierras, ni quien lo dixese lo sabria significar, ni quien lo oyese podria entender, sino que sepa V. M. que en ocho leguas que duró hasta este puerto estuvímos en las andar doze dias, digo los postreros en llegar al cabo de él, en que muriéron sesenta y ocho cavallos despeñados y desxaretados, y todos los demas viniéron heridos y tan lastimados que no pensámos aprovecharnos de ninguno." Carta Quinta de Cortés, MS.

[28] "If any unhappy wretch had become giddy in this transit," says Cortés, "he must inevitably have been precipitated into the gulf and perished. There were upwards of twenty of these frightful passes." Carta Quinta, MS.

presses straight towards the mark, and, when he has reached it, springs at once on his unsuspecting victim. Before Cortés made his assault, his scouts fortunately fell in with some of the inhabitants of the place, from whom they received tidings of the death of Olid, and of the reëstablishment of his own authority. Cortés, therefore, entered the place like a friend, and was cordially welcomed by his countrymen, greatly astonished, says Diaz, "by the presence among them of the general so renowned throughout these countries."[29]

The colony was at this time sorely suffering from famine; and to such extremity was it soon reduced, that the troops would probably have found a grave in the very spot to which they had looked forward as the goal of their labors, but for the seasonable arrival of a vessel with supplies from Cuba. With a perseverance which nothing could daunt, Cortés made an examination of the surrounding country, and occupied a month more in exploring dismal swamps, steaming with unwholesome exhalations, and infected with bilious fevers, and with swarms of venomous insects which left peace neither by day nor night. At length he embarked with a part of his forces on board of two brigantines, and, after touching at one or two ports in the Bay, anchored off Truxillo, the principal Spanish settlement on that coast. The surf was too high for him easily to effect a landing; but the inhabitants, overjoyed at his arrival, rushed into the shallow water and eagerly bore back the general in their arms to the shore.[30]

After he had restored the strength and spirits of his men, the indefatigable commander prepared for a new expedition, the object of which was to explore and to reduce the extensive province of Nicaragua. One may well feel astonished at the adventurous spirit of a man, who, unsubdued by the terrible sufferings of his recent march, should so soon be prepared for another enterprise equally appalling. It is difficult, in this age of sober sense, to conceive the character of a Castilian cavalier of the sixteenth century, a true counterpart of which it would not have been easy to find in any other nation, even at that time,—or anywhere, indeed, save in those tales of chivalry, which, however wild and extravagant they may seem, were much more true to character than to situation. The mere excitement of exploring the strange and the unknown was a sufficient compensation to the Spanish adventurer for all his toils and trials. It seems to have

[29] "Espantáronse en gran manera, y como supiéron que era Cortés q tan nombrado era en todas estas partes de las Indias, y en Castilla, no sabiā que se hazer de placer." Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 179.

[30] Ibid., cap. 179 et seq.—Herrera, Hist. Gen., dec. 3, lib. 8, cap. 3, 4.—Carta Quinta de Cortés, MS.

been ordered by Providence, that such a race of men should exist contemporaneously with the discovery of the New World, that those regions should be brought to light which were beset with dangers and difficulties so appalling as might have tended to overawe and to discourage the ordinary spirit of adventure. Yet Cortés, though filled with this spirit, proposed nobler ends to himself than those of the mere vulgar adventurer. In the expedition to Nicaragua, he designed, as he had done in that to Honduras, to ascertain the resources of the country in general, and, above all, the existence of any means of communication between the great oceans on its borders. If none such existed, it would at least establish this fact, the knowledge of which, to borrow his own language, was scarcely less important.

The general proposed to himself the further object of enlarging the colonial empire of Castile. The conquest of Mexico was but the commencement of a series of conquests. To the warrior who had achieved this nothing seemed impracticable ; and scarcely would anything have been so, had he been properly sustained. It is no great stretch of imagination, to see the Conqueror of Mexico advancing along the provinces of the vast Isthmus,—Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Darien until he had planted his victorious banner on the shores of the Gulf of Panamá ; and, while it was there fanned by the breezes from the golden South, the land of the Incas, to see him gathering such intelligence of this land as would stimulate him to carry his arms still further, and to anticipate, it might be, the splendid career of Pizarro !

But from these dreams of ambition Cortés was suddenly aroused by such tidings as convinced him, that his absence from Mexico was already too far prolonged, and that he must return without delay, if he would save the capital or the country.

CHAPTER IV.

DISTURBANCES IN MEXICO.—RETURN OF CORTES.—DISTRUST OF THE COURT.—CORTES RETURNS TO SPAIN.—DEATH OF SANDOVAL.—BRILLIANT RECEPTION OF CORTES.—HONORS CONFERRED ON HIM.

1526—1530.

THE intelligence alluded to in the preceding Chapter, was conveyed in a letter to Cortés from the licentiate Zuazo, one of the functionaries to whom the general had committed the administration of the country during his absence. It contained full particulars of the tumultuous proceedings in the capital. No sooner had Cortés quitted it, than dissensions broke out among the different members of the provisional government. The misrule increased as his absence was prolonged. At length tidings were received, that Cortés with his whole army had perished in the morasses of Chiapa. The members of the government showed no reluctance to credit this story. They now openly paraded their own authority; proclaimed the general's death; caused funeral ceremonies to be performed in his honor; took, possession of his property wherever they could meet with it piously devoting a small part of the proceeds to purchasing masses for his soul, while the remainder was appropriated to pay off what was called his debt to the state. They seized, in like manner, the property of other individuals engaged in the expedition. From these outrages they proceeded to others against the Spanish residents in the city, until the Franciscan missionaries left the capital in disgust, while the Indian population were so sorely oppressed, that great apprehensions were entertained of a general rising. Zuazo, who communicated these tidings, implored Cortés to quicken his return. He was a temperate man, and the opposition which he had made to the tyrannical measures of his comrades had been rewarded with exile.[1]

[1] Carta Quinta de Cortés, MS.—Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 185.—Relacion del Tesorero Strada, MS., México, 1526.

The general, greatly alarmed by this account, saw that no alternative was left but to abandon all further schemes of conquest, and to return at once, if he would secure the preservation of the empire which he had won. He accordingly made the necessary arrangements for settling the administration of the colonies at Honduras, and embarked with a small number of followers for Mexico.

He had not been long at sea, when he encountered such a terrible tempest as seriously damaged his vessel, and compelled him to return to port and refit. A second attempt proved equally unsuccessful; and Cortés, feeling that his good star had deserted him, saw, in this repeated disaster, an intimation from Heaven that he was not to return.[2] He contented himself, therefore, with sending a trusty messenger to advise his friends of his personal safety in Honduras. He then instituted processions and public prayers to ascertain the will of Heaven, and to deprecate its anger. His health now showed the effects of his recent sufferings, and declined under a wasting fever. His spirits sank with it, and he fell into a state of gloomy despondency. Bernal Diaz, speaking of him at this time, says, that nothing could be more wan and emaciated than his person, and that so strongly was he possessed with the idea of his approaching end, that he procured a Franciscan habit,—for it was common to be laid out in the habit of some one or other of the monastic orders,—in which to be carried to the grave.[3]

From this deplorable apathy Cortés was roused by fresh advices urging his presence in Mexico, and by the judicious efforts of his good friend Sandoval, who had lately returned, himself, from an excursion into the interior. By his persuasion, the general again consented to try his fortunes on the seas. He embarked on board of a brigantine, with a few followers, and bade adieu to the disastrous shores of Honduras, April 25, 1526. He had nearly made the coast of New Spain, when a heavy gale threw him off his course, and drove him to the island of Cuba. After staying there some time to recruit his exhausted strength, he again put to sea on the 16th of May, and in eight days landed near San Juan de Ulua, whence he proceeded about five leagues on foot to Medellin.

Cortés was so much changed by disease, that his person was not easily recognized. But no sooner was it known, that the general had returned, than crowds of people, white men and natives, thronged from all the neighboring country to welcome

[2] Carta Quinta de Cortés, MS.
[3] Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 184, et seq.—Carta Quinta de Cortés, MS.

him. The tidings spread far and wide on the wings of the wind, and his progress to the capital was a triumphal procession. The inhabitants came from the distance of eighty leagues to have a sight of him; and they congratulated one another on the presence of the only man who could rescue the country from its state of anarchy. It was a resurrection of the dead,—so industriously had the reports of his death been circulated, and so generally believed.[4]

At all the great towns where he halted he was sumptuously entertained. Triumphal arches were thrown across the road, and the streets were strewed with flowers as he passed. After a night's repose at Tezcuco, he made his entrance in great state into the capital. The municipality came out to welcome him, and a brilliant cavalcade of armed citizens formed his escort; while the lake was covered with barges of the Indians, all fancifully decorated with their gala dresses, as on the day of his first arrival among them. The streets echoed to music and dancing, and sounds of jubilee, as the procession held on its way to the great convent of St. Francis, where thanksgivings were offered up for the safe return of the general, who then proceeded to take up his quarters once more in his own princely residence.[5] It was in June, 1526, when Cortés reëntered Mexico; nearly two years had elapsed since he had left it, on his difficult march to Honduras—a march which led to no important results, but which consumed nearly as much time, and was attended with sufferings quite as severe, as the conquest of Mexico itself.[6]

Cortés did not abuse his present advantage. He, indeed, instituted proceedings against his enemies; but he followed them up so languidly, as to incur the imputation of weakness. It is the only instance in which he has been accused of weakness;

[4] Carta Quinta de Cortés, MS.—Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 189, 190—Carta de Cortés al Emperador, MS., México, Sept. 11, 1526.

[5] Carta de Ocaño, MS., Agosto 31, 1526.—Carta Quinta de Cortés, MS.

[6] "What Cortés suffered," says Dr. Robertson, "on this march, a distance, according to Gomara, of 3000 miles,"—(the distance must be greatly exaggerated,)—"from famine, from the hostility of the natives, from the climate, and from hardships of every species, has nothing in history parallel to it, but what occurs in the adventures of the other discoverers and conquerors of the New World. Cortés was employed in this dreadful service above two years; and, though it was not distinguished by any splendid event, he exhibited, during the course of it, greater personal courage, more fortitude of mind, more perseverance and patience, than in any other period or scene in his life." (Hist. of America, Note 96.) The historian's remarks are just; as the passages, which I have borrowed from the extraordinary records of the Conqueror, may show. Those who are desirous of seeing something of the narrative told in his own way, will find a few pages of it translated in the *Appendix, Part 2, No.* 14.

and, since it was shown in the prosecution of his own injuries, it may be thought to reflect no discredit on his character.[7]

He was not permitted long to enjoy the sweets of triumph. In the month of July he received advices of the arrival of a *juez de residencia* on the coast, sent by the court of Madrid to supersede him temporarily in the government. The Crown of Castile, its colonial empire extended, became less and less capable of watching over its administration. It was therefore obliged to place vast powers in the hands of its viceroys; and as suspicion naturally accompanies weakness, it was ever prompt to listen to accusations against these powerful vassals. In such cases the government adopted the expedient of sending out a commissioner, or *juez de residencia*, with authority to investigate the conduct of the accused, to suspend him in the meanwhile from his office, and, after a judicial examination, to reinstate him in it, or to remove him altogether, according to the issue of the trial. The enemies of Cortés had been, for a long time, busy in undermining his influence at court, and in infusing suspicions of his loyalty in the bosom of the emperor. Since his elevation to the government of the country, they had redoubled their mischievous activity, and they assailed his character with the foulest imputations. They charged him with appropriating to his own use the gold which belonged to the Crown, and especially with secreting the treasures of Montezuma. He was said to have made false reports of the provinces he had conquered, that he might defraud the exchequer of its lawful revenues. He had distributed the principal offices among his own creatures; and had acquired an unbounded influence, not only over the Spaniards, but the natives, who were all ready to do his bidding. He had expended large sums in fortifying both the capital and his own palace; and it was evident, from the magnitude of his schemes and his preparations, that he designed to shake off his allegiance, and to establish an independent sovereignty in New Spain.[8]

The government, greatly alarmed by these formidable charges, the probability of which they could not estimate, appointed a commissioner with full powers to investigate the matter. The person selected for this delicate office was Luis Ponce de Leon, a man of high family, young for such a post, but of a mature

[7] "Y esto yo lo oí dezir á los del Real Consejo de Indias, estando presente el señor Obispo Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, que se descuidó mucho Cortés, en ello, y se lo tuviéron á floxedad." Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista cap. 190.

[8] Memorial de Luis Cardenas, MS.—Carta de Diego de Ocaña, MS.—Herrera, Hist. Gen., dec. 3, lib. 8, cap. 14, 15.

judgment, and distinguished for his moderation and equity. The nomination of such a minister gave assurance, that the Crown meant to do justly by Cortés.

The emperor wrote at the same time with his own hand to the general, advising him of this step, and assuring him, that it was taken, not from distrust of his integrity, but to afford him the opportunity of placing that integrity in a clear light before the world.[9]

Ponce de Leon reached Mexico in July, 1526. He was received with all respect by Cortés and the municipality of the capital; and the two parties interchanged those courtesies with each other which gave augury that the future proceedings would be conducted in a spirit of harmony. Unfortunately, this fair beginning was blasted by the death of the commissioner in a few weeks after his arrival, a circumstance which did not fail to afford another item in the loathsome mass of accusation heaped upon Cortés. The commissioner fell the victim of a malignant fever, which carried off a number of those who had come over in the vessel with him.[10]

On his death-bed, Ponce de Leon delegated his authority to an infirm old man, who survived but a few months, and transmitted the reins of government to a person named Estrada or Strada, the royal treasurer, one of the officers sent from Spain to take charge of the finances, and who was personally hostile to Cortés. The Spanish residents would have persuaded Cortés to assert for himself at least an equal share of the authority, to which they considered Estrada as having no sufficient title. But the general, with singular moderation, declined a competition in this matter, and determined to abide a more decided expression of his sovereign's will. To his mortification, the nomination of Estrada was confirmed, and this dignitary soon contrived to inflict on his rival all those annoyances by which a little mind, in possession of unexpected power, endeavors to make his superiority felt over a great one. The recommendations of Cortés were disregarded; his friends mortified and insulted; his attendants outraged by injuries. One of the domestics of his friend Sandoval, for some slight offence, was sentenced to lose his hand; and, when the general remonstrated against these acts of violence, he was peremptorily commanded to leave the city! The Spaniards, indignant at this outrage, would have taken up arms in his defence; but Cortés would allow no resistance and, simply remarking, "that it was well, that those, who, at the price

[9] Carta del Emperador, MS., Toledo; Nov. 4, 1525.

[10] Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 192.—Carta de Cortés al Emp. MS., Mexico, Set. 11, 1526.

of their blood, had won the capital, should not be allowed a footing in it," withdrew to his favorite villa of Cojohuacan, a few miles distant, to wait there the result of these strange proceedings.[11]

The suspicions of the Court of Madrid, meanwhile, fanned by the breath of calumny, had reached the most preposterous height. One might have supposed, that it fancied the general was organizing a revolt throughout the colonies, and meditated nothing less than an invasion of the mother country. Intelligence having been received, that a vessel might speedily be expected from New Spain, orders were sent to the different ports of the kingdom, and even to Portugal, to sequestrate the cargo, under the expectation that it contained remittances to the general's family which belonged to the Crown; while his letters, affording the most luminous account of all his proceedings and discoveries, were forbidden to be printed. Fortunately, however, three letters, constituting the most important part of the Conqueror's correspondence, had been given to the public, some years previous, by the indefatigable press of Seville.

The Court, moreover, made aware of the incompetency of the treasurer, Estrada, to the present delicate conjecture, now intrusted the whole affair of the inquiry to a commission dignified with the title of the Royal Audience of New Spain. This body was clothed with full powers to examine into the charges against Cortés, with instructions to send him back, as a preliminary measure, to Castile,—peacefully if they could, but forcibly if necessary. Still afraid that its belligerent vassal might defy the authority of this tribunal, the government resorted to artifice to effect his return. The president of the Indian Council was commanded to write to him, urging his presence in Spain to vindicate himself from the charges of his enemies, and offering his personal coöperation in his defence. The emperor further wrote a letter to the Audience, containing his commands for Cortés to return, as the government wished to consult him on matters relating to the Indies, and to bestow on him a recompense suited to his high deserts. This letter was intended to be shown to Cortés.[12]

But it was superfluous to put in motion all this complicated machinery to effect a measure on which Cortés was himself resolved. Proudly conscious of his own unswerving loyalty, and of the benefits he had rendered to his country, he felt deeply sensible to this unworthy requital of them, especially on the very

[11] Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 194.—Carta de Cortés al Emp., MS., Set. 11, 1526.

[12] Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 4, lib. 2, cap. 1; and lib. 3, cap 8.

theatre of his achievements. He determined to abide no longer where he was exposed to such indignities; but to proceed at once to Spain, present himself before his sovereign, boldly assert his innocence, and claim redress for his wrongs, and a just reward for his services. In the close of his letter to the emperor, detailing the painful expedition to Honduras, after enlarging on the magnificent schemes he had entertained of discovery in the South Sea, and vindicating himself from the charge of a too lavish expenditure, he concludes with the lofty yet touching, declaration, "that he trusts his Majesty will in time acknowledge his deserts; but, if that unhappily shall not be, the world at least will be assured of his loyalty, and he himself shall have the conviction of having done his duty; and no better inheritance than this shall he ask for his children."[13]

No sooner was the intention of Cortés made known, than it excited a general sensation through the country. Even Estrada relented; he felt that he had gone too far, and that it was not his policy to drive his noble enemy to take refuge in his own land. Negotiations were opened, and an attempt at a reconciliation was made, through the bishop of Tlascala. Cortés received these overtures in a courteous spirit, but his resolution was ununshaken. Having made the necessary arrangements, therefore, in Mexico, he left the Valley, and proceeded at once to the coast. Had he entertained the criminal ambition imputed to him by his enemies, he might have been sorely tempted by the repeated offers of support, which were made to him, whether in good or in bad faith, on the journey, if he would but reassume the government, and assert his independence of Castile. But these disloyal advances he rejected with the scorn they merited.[14]

On his arrival at Villa Rica, he received the painful tidings of the death of his father, Don Martin Cortés, whom he had hoped so soon to embrace, after his long and eventful absence. Having celebrated his obsequies with every mark of filial respect, he made preparations for his speedy departure. Two of the best vessels in the port were got ready and provided with everything requisite for a long voyage. He was attended by his friend, the

[13] "Todas estas entradas están ahora para partir casi á una, plega á Dios de los guiar como él se sirva, que yo aunque V. M. mas me mande desfavoreçer no tengo de dejar de servir, que no es posible, que por tiempo V. M. no conosca mis servicios, y ya que esto no sea, yo me satisfago con hazer lo que debo, y con saber que á todo el mundo tengo satisfecho, y les son notorios mis servicios y lealdad, con que los hago, y no quiero otro mayorasgo sino este." Carta Quinta, MS.

[14] Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 194.—Carta de Ocaña, MS., Agosto 31, 1526.

faithful Sandoval, by Tapia, and some other cavaliers, most attached to his person. He also took with him several Aztec and Tlascalan chiefs, and among them a son of Montezuma, and another of Maxixca, the friendly old Tlascalan lord, both of whom were desirous to accompany the general to Castile. He carried home a large collection of plants and minerals, as specimens of the natural resources of the country; several wild animals and birds of gaudy plumage; various fabrics of delicate workmanship, especially the gorgeous feather-work; and a number of jugglers, dancers, and buffoons, who greatly astonished the Europeans by the marvellous facility of their performances, and were thought a suitable present for his Holiness, the Pope.[15] Lastly, Cortés displayed his magnificence in a rich treasure of jewels, among which were emeralds of extraordinary size and lustre, gold to the amount of two hundred thousand *pesos de oro*, and fifteen hundred marks of silver. "In fine," says Herrera, "he came in all the state of a great lord."[16]

After a brief and prosperous voyage, Cortés came in sight once more of his native shores, and, crossing the bar of Saltes, entered the little port of Palos in May, 1528,—the same spot where Columbus had landed five and thirty years before, on his return from the discovery of the Western World. Cortés was not greeted with the enthusiasm and public rejoicings which welcomed the great navigator; and, indeed, the inhabitants were not prepared for his arrival. From Palos he soon proceeded to the convent of La Rabida, the same place also, within the hospitable walls of which Columbus had found a shelter. An interesting circumstance is mentioned by historians, connected with his short stay at Palos. Francisco Pizarro, the Conqueror of Peru, had arrived there, having come to Spain to solicit aid for his great enterprise.[17] He was then in the commencement of his brilliant career, as Cortés might be said to be at the close of his. He was an old acquaintance, and a kinsman, as is affirmed, of the general, whose mother was a Pizarro.[18] The meeting of

[15] The Pope, who was of the joyous Medici family, Clement VII., and the cardinals, were greatly delighted with the feats of the Indian jugglers, according to Diaz; and his Holiness, who, it may be added, received at the same time from Cortés a substantial donative of gold and jewels, publicly testified, by prayers and solemn processions, his great sense of the services rendered to Christianity by the Conquerors of Mexico, and generously requited them by bulls, granting plenary absolution from their sins. Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 195.

[16] "Y en fin venia como gran Señor." Hist. Gen., dec. 4, lib. 3, cap. 8.

[17] Herrera, Hist. Gen., dec. 4, lib. 4, cap. 1.—Cavo, Los Tres Siglos de Méx., tom. I. p. 78.

[18] Pizarro y Orellana, Varones Ilustres, p. 121.

these two extraordinary men, the Conquerors of the North and of the South, in the New World, as they set foot, after their eventful absence, on the shores of their native land, and that, too, on the spot consecrated by the presence of Columbus, has something in it striking to the imagination. It has accordingly attracted the attention of one of the most illustrious of living poets, who, in a brief, but beautiful sketch, has depicted the scene in the genuine coloring of the age.[19]

While reposing, from the fatigues of his voyage, at La Rabida, an event occurred which afflicted Cortés deeply, and which threw a dark cloud over his return. This was the death of Gonzalo de Sandoval, his trusty friend, and so long the companion of his fortunes. He was taken ill in a wretched inn at Palos, soon after landing; and his malady gained ground so rapidly, that it was evident his constitution, impaired, probably, by the extraordinary fatigues he had of late years undergone, would be unable to resist it. Cortés was instantly sent for, and arrived in time to administer the last consolations of friendship to the dying cavalier. Sandoval met his approaching end with composure, and, having given the attention, which the short interval allowed, to the settlement of both his temporal and spiritual concerns, he breathed his last in the arms of his commander.

Sandoval died at the premature age of thirty-one.[20] He was in many respects the most eminent of the great captains formed under the eyes of Cortés. He was of good family, and a native of Madellin, also the birthplace of the general, for whom he had the warmest personal regard. Cortés soon discerned his uncommon qualities, and proved it by uniformly selecting the young officer for the most difficult commissions. His conduct on these occasions fully justified the preference. He was a decided favorite with the soldiers; for, though strict in enforcing discipline, he was careful of their comforts and little mindful of his own. He had nothing of the avarice so common in the Castilian cavalier; and seemed to have no other ambition than that of faithfully discharging the duties of his profession. He was a plain man, affecting neither the showy manners nor the bravery in costume which distinguished Alvarado, the Aztec *Tonatiuh*. The expression of his countenance was open and manly; his chestnut hair curled close to his head; his frame was strong and sinewy. He had a lisp in his utterance, which made his voice somewhat indistinct. Indeed, he was no speaker; but, if slow of speech, he was prompt and energetic in action. He had pre-

[19] See the conclusion of Rogers' Voyage of Columbus.

[20] Bernal Diaz says, that Sandoval was twenty-two years old, when he first came to New Spain, in 1519.—Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 205.

cisely the qualities which fitted him for the perilous enterprise in which he was embarked. He had accomplished his task; and, after having escaped death, which lay waiting for him in every step of his path, had come home, as it would seem, to his native land, only to meet it there.

His obsequies were performed with all solemnity by the Franciscan friars of La Rabida, and his remains were followed to their final resting-place by the comrades who had so often stood by his side in battle. They were laid in the cemetery of the convent, which, shrouded in its forest of pines, stood, and may yet stand, on the bold eminence that overlooks the waste of waters so lately traversed by the adventurous soldier.[21]

It was not long after this melancholy event, that Cortés and his suite began their journey into the interior. The general stayed a few days at the castle of the duke of Medina Sidonia, the most powerful of the Andalusian lords, who hospitably entertained him, and, at his departure, presented him with several noble Arabian horses. Cortés first directed his steps towards Guadaloupe, where he passed nine days, offering up prayers and causing masses to be performed at Our Lady's shrine for the soul of his departed friend.

Before his departure from La Rabida, he had written to the Court, informing it of his arrival in the country. Great was the sensation caused there by the intelligence; the greater, that the late reports of his treasonable practices had made it wholly unexpected. His arrival produced an immediate change of feeling. All cause of jealousy was now removed; and, as the clouds, which had so long settled over the royal mind, were dispelled, the emperor seemed only anxious to show his sense of the distinguished services of his so dreaded vassal. Orders were sent to different places on the route to provide him with suitable accommodations, and preparations were made to give him a brilliant reception in the capital.

Meanwhile Cortés had formed the acquaintance at Guadaloupe of several persons of distinction, and among them of the family of the *comendador* of Leon, a nobleman of the highest consideration at court. The general's conversation, enriched with the stores of a life of adventure, and his manners, in which the authority of habitual command was tempered by the frank and careless freedom of the soldier, made a most favorable impression on his new friends; and their letters to the court, where he was yet unknown, heightened the interest already felt in this remarkable man. The tidings of his arrival had by this time

[21] Ibid., cap. 195.

spread far and wide, throughout the country; and, as he resumed his journey, the roads presented a spectacle such as had not been seen since the return of Columbus. Cortés did not usually affect an ostentation of dress, though he loved to display the pomp of a great lord in the number and magnificence of his retainers. His train was now swelled by the Indian chieftains, who, by the splendors of their barbaric finery, gave additional brilliancy, as well as novelty, to the pageant. But his own person was the object of general curiosity. The houses and the streets of the great towns and villages were thronged with spectators, eager to look on the hero, who, with his single arm, as it were, had won an empire for Castile, and who, to borrow the language of an old historian, 'came in the pomp and glory,' not so much of a great vassal, as of an independent monarch." [22]

As he approached Toledo, then the rival of Madrid, the press of the multitude increased, till he was met by the duke de Bejar, the count de Aguilar, and others of his steady friends, who, at the head of a large body of the principal nobility and cavaliers of the city, came out to receive him, and attended him to the quarters prepared for his residence. It was a proud moment for Cortés; and distrusting, as he well might, his reception by his countrymen, it afforded him a greater satisfaction than the brilliant entrance, which, a few years previous, he had made into the capital of Mexico.

The following day he was admitted to an audience by the emperor, and Cortés, gracefully kneeling to kiss the hand of his sovereign, presented to him a memorial which succinctly recounted his services and the requital he had received for them. The emperor graciously raised him, and put many questions to him respecting the countries he had conquered. Charles was pleased with the general's answers, and his intelligent mind took great satisfaction in inspecting the curious specimens of Indian ingenuity which his vassal had brought with him from New Spain. In subsequent conversations the emperor repeatedly consulted Cortés on the best mode of administering the government of the colonies; and by his advice introduced some important regulations, especially for ameliorating the condition of the natives, and for encouraging domestic industry.

The monarch took frequent opportunity to show the confi-

[22] "Vino de las Indias despues de la conquista de México, con tanto acompañamiento y magestad, que mas parecia de Príncipe, ó señor poderosíssimo, que de Capitan y vasallo de algun Rey ó Emperador." Lanuza, Historias Ecclesiásticas y Seculares de Aragon, (Zaragoza, 1622,) lib. 3, cap. 14.

dence which he now reposed in Cortés. On all public occasions he appeared with him by his side; and once, when the general lay ill of a fever, Charles paid him a visit in person, and remained some time in the apartment of the invalid. This was an extraordinary mark of condescension in the haughty court of Castile; and it is dwelt upon with becoming emphasis by the historians of the time, who seem to regard it as an ample compensation for all the sufferings and services of Cortés.[23]

The latter had now fairly triumphed over opposition. The courtiers, with that ready instinct which belongs to the tribe, imitated the example of their master; and even envy was silent, amidst the general homage that was paid to the man who had so lately been a mark for the most envenomed calumny. Cortés, without a title, without a name but what he had created for himself, was at once, as it were, raised to a level with the proudest nobles in the land.

He was so still more effectually by the substantial honors which were accorded to him by his sovereign in the course of the following year. By an instrument, dated July 6th, 1529, the emperor raised him to the dignity of the Marquess of the Valley of Oaxaca;[24] and the title of "marquess," when used without the name of the individual, has been always appropriated in the colonies, in an especial manner, to Cortés, as the title of "admiral" was to Columbus.[25]

Two other instruments, dated in the same month of July, assigned to Cortés a vast tract of land in the rich province of Oaxaca, together with large estates in the city of Mexico, and other places in the Valley.[26] The princely domain thus granted comprehended more than twenty large towns and villages, and twenty-three thousand vassals. The language in which the gift was made greatly enhanced its value. The preamble of the instrument, after enlarging on the "good services rendered by Cortés in the Conquest, and the great benefits resulting therefrom, both in respect to the increase of the Castilian empire and the advancement of the Holy Catholic Faith," acknowledges

[23] Gomara, Crónica, cap. 183.—Herrera, Hist. Gen., dec. 4, lib. 4, cap. 1.—Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 195.

[24] Titulo de Marques, MS., Barcelona, 6 de Julio, 1529.

[25] Humboldt, Essai Politique, tom. II. p. 30, note.

According to Lanuza, he was offered by the emperor the Order of St. Jago, but declined it, because no *encomienda* was attached to it. (Hist. de Aragon, tom. I. lib. 3, cap. 14.) But Caro de Torres, in his History of the Military Orders of Castile, enumerates Cortés among the members of the Compostellan fraternity. Hist. de las Ord. Militares, (Madrid, 1629,) fol. 103, et seq.

[26] Merced de Tierras Immediatas á México, MS., Barcelona, 23 de Julio, 1529.—Merced de los Vasallos, MS., Barcelona, 6 de Julio, 1529.

"the sufferings he had undergone in accomplishing this glorious work, and the fidelity and obedience, with which, as a good and trusty vassal, he had ever served the Crown."[27] It declares, in conclusion, that it grants this recompense of his deserts, because it is "the duty of princes to honor and reward those who serve them well and loyally, in order that the memory of their great deeds should be perpetuated, and others be incited by their example to the performance of the like illustrious exploits." The unequivocal testimony thus borne by his sovereign to his unwavering loyalty was most gratifying to Cortés;—how gratifying, every generous soul, who has been the subject of suspicion undeserved, will readily estimate. The language of the general in after time shows how deeply he was touched by it.[28]

Yet there was one degree in the scale, above which tne royal gratitude would not rise. Neither the solicitations of Cortés, nor those of the duke de Bejar, and his other powerful friends, could prevail on the emperor to reinstate him in the government of Mexico. The country, reduced to tranquillity, had no longer need of his commanding genius to control it; and Charles did not care to place again his formidable vassal in a situation which might revive the dormant spark of jealousy and distrust. It was the policy of the Crown to employ one class of its subjects to effect its conquests, and another class to rule over them. For the latter it selected men in whom the fire of ambition was tempered by a cooler judgment naturally, or by the sober influence of age. Even Columbus, notwithstanding the terms of his original "capitulation" with the Crown, had not been permitted to preside over the colonies; and still less likely would it be to concede this power to one possessed of the aspiring temper of Cortés.

But, although the emperor refused to commit the civil government of the colony into his hands, he reinstated him in his mili-

[27] E nos habemos recibido y tenemos de vos por bien servido en ello, y acatando los grandes provechos que de vuestros servicios han redundado, ansí para el servicio de Nuestro Señor y aumento de su santa fe católica, y en las dichas tierras que estaban sin conocimiento ni fe se han plantado, como el acrecentamiento que dello ha redundado á nuestra corona real destos reynos, y los trabajos que en ello habeis pasado, y la fidelidad y obediencia con que siempre nos habeis servido como bueno é fiel servidor y vasallo nuestro, de que somos ciertos y confiados." Merced de los Vasallos, MS.

[28] "The benignant reception which I experienced, on my return, from your Majesty," says Cortés, "your kind expressions and generous treatment, make me not only forget all my toils and sufferings, but even cause me regret that I have not been called to endure more in your service." (Carta de Cortés al Lic. Nuñez, MS. 1535.) This memorial, addressed to his agent in Castile, was designed for the emperor.

tary command. By a royal ordinance, dated also in July, 1529, the marquess of the Valley was named Captain-General of New Spain, and of the coasts of the South Sea. He was empowered to make discoveries in the Southern Ocean, with the right to rule over such lands as he should colonize,[29] and by a subsequent grant he was to become proprietor of one twelfth of all his discoveries.[30] The government had no design to relinquish the services of so able a commander. But it warily endeavored to withdraw him from the scene of his former triumphs, and to throw open a new career of ambition, that might stimulate him still further to enlarge the dominions of the Crown.

Thus gilded by the sunshine of royal favor, "rivalling," to borrow the homely comparison of an old chronicler, "Alexander in the fame of his exploits, and Crassus in that of riches,"[31] with brilliant manners, and a person, which, although it showed the effects of hard service, had not yet lost all the attractions of youth, Cortés might now be regarded as offering an enviable alliance for the best houses in Castile. It was not long before he paid his addresses, which were favorably received, to a member of that noble house, which had so steadily supported him in the dark hour of his fortunes. The lady's name was Doña Juana de Zuñiga, daughter of the second count de Aguilar, and niece of the duke de Bejar.[32] She was much younger than himself, beautiful, and, as events showed, not without spirit. One of his presents to his youthful bride excited the admiration and envy of the fairer part of the court. This was five emeralds, of wonderful size and brilliancy. These jewels had been cut by the Aztecs into the shapes of flowers, fishes, and into other fanciful forms, with an exquisite style of workmanship which enhanced their original value.[33] They were, not improbably, part

[29] Título de Capitan General de la Nueva España y Costa del Sur, MS., Barcelona, 6 de Julio, 1529.

[30] Asiento y Capitulacion que hizo con el Emperador Don H. Cortés, MS., Madrid, 27 de Oct. 1529.

[31] "Que, segun se dezia, excedia en las hazañas á Alexandro Magno, y en las riquezas á Crasso." (Lanuza, Hist. de Aragon, lib. 3, cap. 14.) The rents of the marquess of the Valley, according to L. Marineo Siculo, who lived at the court at this time, were about 60,000 ducats a year. Cosas Memorables de España, (Alcalá de Henares, 1539,) fol. 24.

[32] Doña Juana was of the house of Arellano, and of the royal lineage of Navarre. Her father was not a very wealthy noble. L. Marineo Siculo, Cosas Mem., fol. 24, 25.

[33] One of these precious stones was as valuable as Shylock's turquoise. Some Genoese merchants in Seville offered Cortés, according to Gomara, 40,000 ducats for it. The same author gives a more particular account of the jewels, which may interest some readers. It shows the ingenuity of the artist, who, without steel, could so nicely cut so hard a material. One emerald was in the form of a rose; the second in that of a horn; a third, like a

of the treasure of the unfortunate Montezuma, and, being easily portable, may have escaped the general wreck of the *noche triste*. The Queen of Charles the Fifth, it is said,—it may be the idle gossip of a court,—had intimated a willingness to become proprietor of some of these magnificent baubles; and the preference which Cortés gave to his fair bride caused some feelings of estrangement in the royal bosom, which had an unfavorable influence on the future fortunes of the Marquess.

Late in the summer of 1529, Charles the Fifth left his Spanish dominions for Italy. Cortés accompanied him on his way, probably to the place of embarkation; and in the capital of Aragon we find him, according to the national historian, exciting the same general interest and admiration among the people as he had done in Castile. On his return, there seemed no occasion for him to protract his stay longer in the country. He was weary of the life of idle luxury which he had been leading for the last year, and which was so foreign to his active habits and the stirring scenes to which he had been accustomed. He determined, therefore, to return to Mexico, where his extensive property required his presence, and where a new field was now opened to him for honorable enterprise.

fish, with eyes of gold; the fourth was like a little bell, with a fine pearl for the tongue, and on the rim was this inscription, in Spanish, *Blessed is he who created thee.* The fifth, which was the most valuable, was a small cup with a foot of gold, and with four little chains, of the same metal, attached to a large pearl as a button. The edge of the cup was of gold, on which was engraven this Latin sentence, *Inter natos mulierum non surrexit major.* Gomara, Crónica, cap. 184.

CHAPTER V.

CORTES REVISITS MEXICO.—RETIRES TO HIS ESTATES.—HIS VOYAGES OF DISCOVERY.—FINAL RETURN TO CASTILE.—COLD RECEPTION.—DEATH OF CORTES.—HIS CHARACTER.

1530—1547.

EARLY in the spring of 1530, Cortés embarked for New Spain. He was accompanied by the marchioness, his wife, together with his aged mother, who had the good fortune to live to see her son's elevation, and by a magnificent retinue of pages and attendants, such as belonged to the household of a powerful noble. How different from the forlorn condition, in which, twenty-six years before, he had been cast loose, as a wild adventurer, to seek his bread upon the waters!

The first point of his destination was Hispaniola, where he was to remain until he received tidings of the organization of the new government that was to take charge of Mexico.[1] In the preceding Chapter it was stated, that the administration of the country had been intrusted to a body called the Royal Audience; one of whose first duties it was to investigate the charges brought against Cortés. Nuñez de Guzman, his avowed enemy, was placed at the head of this board; and the investigation was conducted with all the rancor of personal hostility. A remarkable document still exists, called the *Pesquisa Secreta*, or "Secret Inquiry," which contains a record of the proceedings against Cortés. It was prepared by the secretary of the Audience, and signed by the several members. The document is very long, embracing nearly a hundred folio pages. The name and the testimony of every witness are given, and the whole forms a mass of loathsome details such as might better suit a prosecution in a petty municipal court than that of a great officer of the Crown.

The charges are eight in number, involving, among other crimes, that of a deliberate design to cast off his allegiance to the Crown; that of the murder of two of the commissioners

[1] Carta de Cortés al Emperador, MS., Tezcuco, 10 de Oct., 1530.

who had been sent out to supersede him; of the murder of his own wife, Catalina Xuarez;[2] of extortion, and of licentious practices,—of offences, in short, which, from their private nature, would seem to have little to do with his conduct as a public man. The testimony is vague and often contradictory; the witnesses are for the most part obscure individuals, and the few persons of consideration among them appear to have been taken from the ranks of his decided enemies. When it is considered, that the inquiry was conducted in the absence of Cortés, before a court, the members of which were personally unfriendly to him, and that he was furnished with no specification of the charges, and had no opportunity, consequently, of disproving them, it is impossible, at this distance of time, to attach any importance to this paper as a legal document. When it is added, that no action was taken on it by the government, to whom it was sent, we may be disposed to regard it simply as a monument of the malice of his enemies. It has been drawn by the curious antiquary from the obscurity to which it had been so long consigned in the Indian archives at Seville; but it can be of no further use to the historian, than to show, that a great name in the sixteenth century exposed its possessor to calumnies as malignant as it has at any time since.[3]

[2] Doña Catalina's death happened so opportunely for the rising fortunes of Cortés, that this charge of murder by her husband has found more credit with the vulgar than the other accusations brought against him. Cortés, from whatever reason, perhaps from the conviction that the charge was too monstrous to obtain credit, never condescended to vindicate his innocence. But, in addition to the arguments mentioned in the text for discrediting the accusation generally, we should consider, that this particular charge attracted so little attention in Castile, where he had abundance of enemies, that he found no difficulty, on his return there, seven years afterwards, in forming an alliance with one of the noblest houses in the kingdom; that no writer of that day, (except Bernal Diaz, who treats it as a base calumny,) not even Las Casas, the stern accuser of the Conquerors, intimates a suspicion of his guilt; and that, lastly, no allusion whatever is made to it in the suit, instituted, some years after her death, by the relatives of Doña Catalina, for the recovery of property from Cortés, pretended to have been derived through her marriage with him,—a suit conducted with acrimony, and protracted for several years. I have not seen the documents connected with this suit, which are still preserved in the archives of the house of Cortés, but the fact has been communicated to me by a distinguished Mexican, who has carefully examined them, and I cannot but regard it as of itself conclusive, that the family, at least, of Doña Catalina, did not attach credit to the accusation.

Yet so much credit has been given to this in Mexico, where the memory of the old Spaniards is not held in especial favor, at the present day, that it has formed the subject of an elaborate discussion in the public periodicals of that city.

[3] This remarkable paper, forming part of the valuable collection of Don

The high-handed measures of the Audience, and the oppressive conduct of Guzman, especially towards the Indians, excited general indignation in the colony, and led to serious apprehensions of an insurrection. It became necessary to supersede an administration so reckless and unprincipled. But Cortés was detained two months at the island, by the slow movements of the Castilian court, before tidings reached him of the appointment of a new Audience for the government of the country. The person selected to preside over it was the bishop of St. Domingo, a prelate whose acknowledged wisdom and virtue gave favorable augury for the conduct of his administration. After this, Cortés resumed his voyage, and landed at Villa Rica on the 15th of July, 1530.

After remaining for a time in the neighborhood, where he received some petty annoyances from the Audience, he proceeded to Tlascala, and publicly proclaimed his powers as Captain-General of New Spain and the South Sea. An edict, issued by the empress during her husband's absence, had interdicted Cortés from approaching within ten leagues of the Mexican capital, while the present authorities were there.[4] The empress was afraid of a collision between the parties. Cortés, however, took up his residence on the opposite side of the lake, at Tezcuco.

No sooner was his arrival there known in the metropolis, than multitudes, both of Spaniards and natives, crossed the lake to pay their respects to their old commander, to offer him their services, and to complain of their manifold grievances. It seemed as if the whole population of the capital was pouring into the neighboring city, where the marquess maintained the state of an independent potentate. The members of the Audience, indignant at the mortifying contrast which their own diminished court presented, imposed heavy penalties on such of the natives as should be found in Tezcuco; and, affecting to consider themselves in danger, made preparations for the defence of the city.

Vargas Ponçe, is without date. It was doubtless prepared in 1529, during the visit of Cortés to Castile. The following Title is prefixed to it.

"Pesquisa secreta.

Relacion de los cargos que resultan de la pesquisa secreta contra Don Hernando Cortés, de los quales no se le dió copia ni traslado á la parte del dicho Don Hernando, así por ser los dichos cargos de la calidad que son, como por estar la persona del dicho Don Hernando ausente como está. Los quales yo Gregorio de Saldaña, escribano de S. M. y escribano de la dicha Residencia, saqué de la dicha pesquisa secreta por mandado de los Señores, Presidente y Oidores de la Audiencia y Chancillería Real que por mandado de S. M. en esta Nueva España reside. Los quales dichos Señores, Presidente y Oidores, envian á S. M. para que los mande ver, y vistos mande proveer lo que á su servicio convenga." MS.

[4] MS., Tordelaguna, 22 de Marzo, 1530.

But these belligerent movements were terminated by the arrival of the new Audience; though Guzman had the address to maintain his hold on a northern province, where he earned a reputation for cruelty and extortion, unrivalled even in the annals of the New World.

Every thing seemed now to assure a tranquil residence to Cortés. The new magistrates treated him with marked respect, and took his advice on the most important measures of government. Unhappily this state of things did not long continue; and a misunderstanding arose between the parties, in respect to the enumeration of the vassals assigned by the Crown to Cortés, which the marquess thought was made on principles prejudicial to his interests, and repugnant to the intentions of the grant.[5] He was still further displeased by finding that the Audience were intrusted, by their commission, with a concurrent jurisdiction with himself in military affairs.[6] This led, occasionally, to an interference, which the proud spirit of Cortés, so long accustomed to independent rule, could ill brook. After submitting to it for a time, he left the capital in disgust, no more to return there, and took up his residence in his city of Cuernavaca.

It was the place won by his own sword from the Aztecs, previous to the siege of Mexico. It stood on the southern slope of the Cordilleras, and overlooked a wide expanse of country, the fairest and most flourishing portion of his own domain. He had erected a stately palace on the spot, and henceforth made this city his favorite residence.[7] It was well situated for superintending his vast estates, and he now devoted himself to bring them into proper cultivation. He introduced the sugar-cane from Cuba, and it grew luxuriantly in the rich soil of the neighboring lowlands. He imported large numbers of merino sheep and other cattle, which found abundant pastures in the country

[5] The principal grievance alleged was, that slaves, many of them held temporarily by their masters, according to the old Aztec usage, were comprehended in the census. The complaint forms part of a catalogue of grievances embodied by Cortés in a memorial to the emperor. It is a clear and business-like paper. Carta de Cortés á Nuñez, MS.

[6] Ibid., MS.

[7] The palace has crumbled into ruins, and the spot is now only remarkable for its natural beauty and its historic associations. "It was the capital," says Madame de Calderon, "of the Tlahuica nation, and, after the Conquest, Cortés built here a splendid palace, a church, and a convent for Franciscans, believing that he had laid the foundation of a great city. It is, however, a place of little importance, though so favored by nature; and the Conqueror's palace is a half-ruined barrack, though a most picturesque object, standing on a hill, behind which starts up the great white volcano. There are some good houses, and the remains of the church which Cortés built, celebrated for its bold arch." Life in Mexico, vol. II. let. 31.

around Tehuantepec. His lands were thickly sprinkled with groves of mulberry trees, which furnished nourishment for the silk-worm. He encouraged the cultivation of hemp and flax, and by his judicious and enterprising husbandry, showed the capacity of the soil for the culture of valuable products before unknown in the land; and he turned these products to the best account, by the erection of sugar-mills, and other works for the manufacture of the raw material. He thus laid the foundation of an opulence for his family, as substantial, if not as speedy, as that derived from the mines. Yet this latter source of wealth was not neglected by him; and he drew gold from the region of Tehuantepec, and silver from that of Zacatecas. The amount derived from these mines was not so abundant as at a later day. But the expense of working them, on the other hand, was much less in the earlier stages of the operation, when the metal lay so much nearer the surface.[8]

But this tranquil way of life did not long content his restless and adventurous spirit; and it sought a vent by availing itself of his new charter of discovery to explore the mysteries of the great Southern Ocean. In 1527, two years before his return to Spain, he had sent a little squadron to the Moluccas. The expedition was attended with some important consequences; but, as they do not relate to Cortés, an account of it will find a more suitable place in the maritime annals of Spain, where it has been given by the able hand which has done so much for the country in this department.[9]

Cortés was preparing to send another squadron of four vessels in the same direction, when his plans were interrupted by his visit to Spain; and his unfinished little navy, owing to the malice of the Royal Audience, who drew off the hands employed in building it, went to pieces on the stocks. Two other squadrons were now fitted out by Cortés, in the years 1532 and 1533, and sent on a voyage of discovery to the North-west.[10] They were unfortunate, though, in the latter expedition, the Californian peninsula was reached, and a landing effected on its southern extremity at Santa Cruz, probably the modern port of La Paz. One of the vessels, thrown on the coast of New Galicia, was

[8] These particulars, respecting the agricultural economy of Cortés, I have derived, in part, from a very able argument, prepared in January 1828, for the Mexican Chamber of Deputies, by Don Lúcas Alaman, in defence of the territorial rights possessed at this day by the Conqueror's descendant, the duke of Monteleone.

[9] Navarrete, Colleccion de los Viages y Descubrimientos, (Madrid, 1837), tom. V., Viages al Maluco.

[10] Instruccion que dió Marques del Valle á Juan de Avellaneda. &c., MS.

seized by Guzman, the old enemy of Cortés, who ruled over that territory, the crew were plundered, and the ship was detained as a lawful prize. Cortés, indignant at the outrage, demanded justice from the Royal Audience; and, as that body was too feeble to enforce its own decrees in his favor, he took redress into his own hands.[11]

He made a rapid but difficult march on Chiametla, the scene of Guzman's spoliation; and, as the latter did not care to face his incensed antagonist, Cortés recovered his vessel, though not the cargo. He was then joined by the little squadron which he had fitted out from his own port of Tehuantepec,—a port, which in the sixteenth century, promised to hold the place since occupied by that of Acapulco.[12] The vessels were provided with everything requisite for planting a colony in the newly discovered region, and transported four hundred Spaniards and *three hundred negro slaves*, which Cortés had assembled for that purpose. With this intention he crossed the Gulf, the Adriatic—to which an old writer compares it—of the Western World.

Our limits will not allow us to go into the details of this disastrous expedition, which was attended with no important results either to its projector or to science. It may suffice to say, that, in the prosecution of it, Cortés and his followers were driven to the last extremity by famine; that he again crossed the Gulf, was tossed about by terrible tempests, without a pilot to guide him, was thrown upon the rocks, where his shattered vessel nearly went to pieces, and, after a succession of dangers and disasters as formidable as any which he had ever encountered on land, succeeded, by means of his indomitable energy, in bringing his crazy bark safe into the same port of Santa Cruz from which he had started.

While these occurrences were passing, the new Royal Audience, after a faithful discharge of its commission, had been superseded by the arrival of a Viceroy, the first ever sent to Spain. Cortés, though invested with similar powers, had the title only of Governor. This was the commencement of the system, afterwards pursued by the Crown, of intrusting the colonial administration to some individual, whose high rank and personal consideration might make him the fitting representative of majesty. The jealousy of the Court did not allow the subject clothed with such ample authority to remain long enough in the same station to form dangerous schemes of ambition, but at the expiration of a

[11] Provision sobre los Descubrimientos del Sur, MS., Setiembre, 1534.

[12] The river Huasacualco furnished great facilities for transporting, across the isthmus, from Vera Cruz, materials to build vessels on the Pacific. Humboldt, Essai Politique, tom. IV. p. 50.

few years he was usually recalled, or transferred to some other province of the vast colonial empire. The person now sent to Mexico was Don Antonio de Mendoza, a man of moderation and practical good sense, and one of that illustrious family who in the preceding reign furnished so many distinguished ornaments to the Church, to the camp, and to letters.

The long absence of Cortés had caused the deepest anxiety in the mind of his wife, the marchioness of the Valley. She wrote to the viceroy immediately on his arrival, beseeching him to ascertain, if possible, the fate of her husband, and, if he could be found, to urge his return. The viceroy, in consequence, despatched two ships in search of Cortés, but whether they reached him before his departure from Santa Cruz is doubtful. It is certain, that he returned safe, after his long absence, to Acapulco, and was soon followed by the survivors of his wretched colony.

Undismayed by these repeated reverses, Cortés, still bent on some discovery worthy of his reputation, fitted out three more vessels, and placed them under the command of an officer named Ulloa. This expedition, which took its departure in July, 1539, was attended with more important results. Ulloa penetrated to the head of the Gulf; then, returning and winding round the coast of the peninsula, doubled its southern point, and ascended as high as the twenty-eighth or twenty-ninth degree of north latitude on its western borders. After this, sending home one of the squadron, the bold navigator held on his course to the north, but was never more heard of.[13]

Thus ended the maritime enterprises of Cortés; sufficiently disastrous in a pecuniary view, since they cost them three hundred thousand *castellanos* of gold, without the return of a ducat.[14] He was even obliged to borrow money, and to pawn his wife's jewels, to procure funds for the last enterprise;[15] thus incurring a debt, which, increased by the great charges of his princely establishment, hung about him during the remainder of his life. But, though disastrous in an economical view, his generous efforts

[13] Instruccion del Marques del Valle, MS.

The most particular and authentic accont of Ulloa's cruise will be found in Ramusio. (Tom. III. pp. 340-354.) It is by one of the officers of the squadron.—My limits will not allow me to give the details of the voyages made by Cortés, which, although not without interest, were attended with no permanent consequences. A good summary of his expeditions in the Gulf has been given by Navarrette in the Introduction to his Relacion del Viage hecho por las Goletas Sutil y Mexicana, (Madrid, 1802,) pp. vi.-xxvi.; and the English reader will find a brief account of them in Greenhow's valuable Memoir on the North-west Coast of North America, (Washington, 1840,) pp. 22-27.

[14] Memorial al Rey del Marques del Valle, MS., 25 de Junio, 1540

[15] Provision sobre los Descubrimientos del Sur, MS.

added important contributions to science. In the course of these expeditions, and those undertaken by Cortés previous to his visit to Spain, the Pacific had been coasted from the Bay of Panama to the Rio Colorado. The great peninsula of California had been circumnavigated as far as to the isle of Cedros, or Cerros, into which the name has since been corrupted. This vast tract, which had been supposed to be an archipelago of islands, was now discovered to be a part of the continent; and its general outline, as appears from the maps of the time, was nearly as well understood as at the present day.[16] Lastly, the navigator had explored the recesses of the Californian Gulf or *Sea of Cortés*, as, in honor of the great discoverer, it is with more propriety named by the Spaniards; and he had ascertained, that instead of the outlet before supposed to exist towards the north, this unknown ocean was locked up within the arms of the mighty continent. These were results that might have made the glory and satisfied the ambition of a common man; but they are lost in the brilliant renown of the former achievements of Cortés.

Notwithstanding the embarrassments of the marquess of the Valley, he still made new efforts to enlarge the limits of discovery, and prepared to fit out another squadron of five vessels, which he proposed to place under the command of a natural son, Don Luis. But the viceroy Mendoza, whose imagination had been inflamed by the reports of an itinerant monk respecting an *El Dorado* in the north, claimed the right of discovery in that direction. Cortés protested against this, as an unwarrantable interference with his own powers. Other subjects of collision arose between them; till the marquess, disgusted with this perpetual check on his authority and his enterprises, applied for redress to Castile.[17] He finally determined to go there to support his claims in person, and to obtain, if possible, remuneration for the heavy charges he had incurred by his maritime expeditions, as well as for the spoliation of his property by the Royal Audience, during his absence from the country; and, lastly, to procure an assignment of his vassals on principles more conformable to the original intentions of the grant. With these objects in view, he bade adieu to his family, and, taking with him his eldest son and heir, Don Martin, then only eight years of age, he embarked at Mexico in 1540, and, after a favorable voyage, again set foot on the shores of his native land.

[16] See the map prepared by the pilot Domingo del Castillo, in 1541, ap. Lorenza, p. 328.

[17] In the collection of Vargas Ponce is a petition of Cortés, setting force his grievances, and demanding an investigation of the vice-king's conduct. It is without date. Peticion contra Don Antonio de Mendoza Virrey, pediendo residencia contra él, MS.

The emperor was absent from the country. But Cortés was honorably received in the capital, where ample accommodations were provided for him and his retinue. When he attended the Royal Council of the Indies, to urge his suit, he was distinguished by uncommon marks of respect. The president went to the door of the hall to receive him, and a seat was provided for him among the members of the Council.[18] But all evaporated in this barren show of courtesy. Justice, proverbially slow in Spain, did not mend her gait for Cortés; and at the expiration of a year, he found himself no nearer the attainment of his object than on the first week after his arrival in the capital.

In the following year, 1541, we find the marquess of the Valley embarked as a volunteer in the memorable expedition against Algiers. Charles the Fifth, on his return to his dominions, laid siege to that stronghold of the Mediterranean corsairs. Cortés accompanied the forces destined to meet the emperor, and embarked on board the vessel of the Admiral of Castile. But a furious tempest scattered the navy, and the admiral's ship was driven a wreck upon the coast. Cortés and his son escaped by swimming, but the former, in the confusion of the scene, lost the inestimable set of jewels noticed in the preceding chapter; "a loss," says an old writer, "that made the expedition fall more heavily on the marquess of the Valley, than on any other man in the kingdom, except the emperor."[19]

It is not necessary to recount the particulars of this disastrous siege, in which Moslem valor, aided by the elements, set at defiance the combined forces of the Christians. A council of war was called, and it was decided to abandon the enterprise and return to Castile. This determination was indignantly received by Cortés, who offered, with the support of the army, to reduce the place himself; and he only expressed the regret, that he had not a handful of those gallant veterans by his side who had served him in the conquest of Mexico. But his offers were derided, as those of a romantic enthusiast. He had not been invited to take part in the discussions of the council of war. It was a marked indignity; but the courtiers, weary of the service, were too much bent on an immediate return to Spain, to hazard the opposition of a man, who, when he had once planted his foot, was never known to raise it again, till he had accomplished his object.[20]

On arriving in Castile, Cortés lost no time in laying his suit

[18] Bernal Diaz, Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 200.

[19] Gomara, Crónica, cap. 237.

[20] Sandoval, Hist. de Cárlos V., lib. 12, cap. 25.—Ferreras, (trad. d'Hermilly,) Hist. d'Espagne, tom. IX. p. 231.

before the emperor. His applications were received by the monarch with civility,—a cold civility, which carried no conviction of its sincerity. His position was materially changed since his former visit to the country. More than ten years had elapsed, and he was now too well advanced in years to give promise of serviceable enterprise in future. Indeed, his undertakings of late had been singularly unfortunate. Even his former successes suffered the disparagement natural to a man of declining fortunes. They were already eclipsed by the magnificent achievements in Peru, which had poured a golden tide into the country, that formed a striking contrast to the streams of wealth, that, as yet, had flowed in but scantily from the silver mines of Mexico. Cortés had to learn, that the gratitude of a Court has reference to the future much more than to the past. He stood in the position of an importunate suitor, whose claims, however just, are too large to be readily allowed. He found, like Columbus, that it was possible to deserve too greatly.[21]

In the month of February, 1544, he addressed a letter to the emperor,—it was the last he ever wrote him,—soliciting his attention to his suit. He begins, by proudly alluding to his past services to the Crown. "He had hoped, that the toils of youth would have secured him repose in his old age. For forty years he had passed his life with little sleep, bad food, and with his arms constantly by his side. He had freely exposed his person to peril, and spent his substance in exploring distant and unknown regions, that he might spread abroad the name of his sovereign, and bring under his sceptre many great and powerful nations. All this he had done, not only without assistance from home, but in the face of obstacles thrown in his way by rivals and by enemies who thirsted like leeches for his blood. He was now old, infirm, and embarrassed with debt. Better had it been for him not to have known the liberal intentions of the emperor, as intimated by his grants; since he should then have devoted himself to the care of his estates, and not have been compelled, as he now was, to contend with the officers of the Crown, against whom it was more difficult to defend himself than to win the land from the enemy." He concludes with beseeching his sovereign to "order the Council of the Indies, with the other

[21] Voltaire tells us, that, one day, Cortés, unable to obtain an audience of the emperor, pushed through the press surrounding the royal carriage, and mounted the steps; and, when Charles inquired "who that man was," he replied, "One who has given you more kingdoms than you had towns before." (Essai sur les Mœurs, chap. 147.) For this most improbable anecdote I have found no authority whatever. It served, however, very well to point a moral,—the main thing with the philosopher of Ferney.

tribunals which had cognizance of his suits, to come to a decision; since he was too old to wander about like a vagrant, but ought rather, during the brief remainder of his life, to stay at home and settle his account with Heaven, occupied with the concerns of his soul, rather than with his substance." [22]

This appeal to his sovereign, which has something in it touching from a man of the haughty spirit of Cortés, had not the effect to quicken the determination of his suit. He still lingered at the court from week to week, and from month to month, beguiled by the deceitful hopes of the litigant, tasting all that bitterness of the soul which arises from hope deferred. After three years more, passed in this unprofitable and humiliating occupation, he resolved to leave his ungrateful country and return to Mexico.

He had proceeded as far as Seville, accompanied by his son, when he fell ill of an indigestion, caused, probably, by irritation and trouble of mind. This terminated in dysentery, and his strength sank so rapidly under the disease, that it was apparent his mortal career was drawing towards its close. He prepared for it by making the necessary arrangements for the settlement of his affairs. He had made his will some time before; and he now executed it. It is a very long document, and in some respects a remarkable one.

The bulk of his property was entailed to his son, Don Martin, then fifteen years of age. In the testament he fixes his majority at twenty-five; but at twenty his guardians were to allow him his full income, to maintain the state becoming his rank. In a paper accompanying the will, Cortés specified the names of the agents to whom he had committed the management of his vast estates scattered over many different provinces; and he requests his executors to confirm the nomination, as these agents have been selected by him from a knowledge of their peculiar qualifications. Nothing can better show the thorough supervision, which, in the midst of pressing public concerns, he had given to the details of his widely extended property.

He makes a liberal provision for his other children, and a generous allowance to several old domestics and retainers in his household. By another clause he gives away considerable sums in charity, and he applies the revenues of his estates in the city of Mexico to establish and permanently endow three public institutions,—a hospital in the capital, which was to be dedicated to Our Lady of the Conception, a college in Cojohuacan for the education of missionaries to preach the gospel among the natives,

[22] The Letter, dated February 3, 1544, Valladolid, may be found entire, in the original, in *Appendix, Part 2, No.* 15.

and a convent, in the same place, for nuns. To the chapel of this convent, situated in his favorite town, he orders that his own body shall be transported for burial, in whatever quarter of the world he may happen to die.

After declaring that he has taken all possible care to ascertain the amount of the tributes formerly paid by his Indian vassals to their native sovereign, he enjoins on his heir, that, in case those which they have hitherto paid shall be found to exceed the right valuation, he shall restore them a full equivalent. In another clause, he expresses a doubt whether it is right to exact personal service from the natives; and commands that a strict inquiry shall be made into the nature and value of such services as he had received, and that, in all cases, a fair compensation shall be allowed for them. Lastly, he makes this remarkable declaration: "It has long been a question, whether one can conscientiously hold property in Indian slaves. Since this point has not yet been determined, I enjoin it on my son Martin and his heirs, that they spare no pains to come to an exact knowledge of the truth; as a matter which deeply concerns the conscience of each of them, no less than mine."[28]

Such scruples of conscience, not to have been expected in Cortés, were still less likely to be met with in the Spaniards of a later generation. The state of opinion in respect to the great question of slavery, in the sixteenth century, at the commencement of the system, bears some resemblance to that which exists in our time, when we may hope it is approaching its conclusion. Las Casas and the Dominicans of the former age, the abolitionists of their day, thundered out their uncompromising invectives against the system, on the broad ground of natural equity and the rights of man. The great mass of proprietors troubled their heads little about the question of right, but were satisfied with with the expediency of the institution. Others more considerate and conscientious, while they admitted the evil, found an argument for its toleration in the plea of necessity, regarding the constitution of the white man as unequal, in a sultry climate, to

[28] "Item. Porque acerca de los esclavos naturales de la dicha Nueva España, así de guerra como de rescate, ha habido y hay muchas dudas y opiniones sobre si se han podido tener con buena conciencia ó no, y hasta ahora no está determinado: Mando que todo aquello que generalmente se averiguare, que en este caso se debe hacer para descargo de las conciencias en lo que toca á estos esclavos de la dicha Nueva España, que se haya y cumpla en todos los que yo tengo, é encargo. Y mando á D. Martin mi hijo subcesor, y á los que despues dél subcedieren en mi Estado, que para averiguar esto hagan todas las diligencias que combengan al descargo de mi conciencia y suyas." Testamento de Hernan Cortés, MS.

the labor of cultivating the soil.[24] In one important respect, the condition of slavery, in the sixteenth century, differed materially from its condition in the nineteenth. In the former, the seeds of the evil, but lately sown, might have been, with comparatively little difficulty, eradicated. But in our time they have struck their roots deep into the social system, and cannot be rudely handled without shaking the very foundations of the political fabric. It is easy to conceive, that a man, who admits all the wretchedness of the institution and its wrong to humanity, may nevertheless hesitate to adopt a remedy, until he is satisfied that the remedy itself is not worse than the disease. That such a remedy will come with time, who can doubt, that has confidence in the ultimate prevalence of the right, and the progressive civilization of his species?

Cortés names, as his executors, and as guardians of his children, the duke of Medina Sidonia, the marquess of Astorga, and the count of Aguilar. For his executors in Mexico, he appoints his wife, the marchioness, the archbishop of Toledo, and two other prelates. The will was executed at Seville, October 11th, 1547.[25]

Finding himself much incommoded, as he grew weaker, by the presence of visitors, to which he was necessarily exposed at Seville, he withdrew to the neighboring village of Castilleja de la Cuesta, attended by his son, who watched over his dying parent with filial solicitude. Cortés seems to have contemplated his approaching end with the composure not always to be found in those who have faced death with indifference on the field of battle. At length, having devoutly confessed his sins and received the sacrament, he expired on the 2d of December, 1547, in the sixty-third year of his age.[26]

The inhabitants of the neighboring country were desirous to show every mark of respect to the memory of Cortés. His funeral obsequies were celebrated with due solemnity by a long train of Andalusian nobles, and of the citizens of Seville, and

[24] This is the argument controverted by Las Casas in his elaborate Memorial addressed to the government, in 1542, on the best method of arresting the destruction of the Aborigines.

[25] This interesting document is in the Royal Archives of Seville; and a copy of it forms part of the valuable collection of Don Vargas Ponçe.

[26] Zuñiga, Annales de Sevilla, p. 504.—Gomara, Crónica, cap. 237.

In his last letter to the emperor, dated in February, 1544, he speaks of himself as being "sixty years of age." But he probably did not mean to be exact to a year. Gomara's statement, that he was born in the year 1485, (Crónica, cap. 1,) is confirmed by Diaz, who tells us, that Cortés used to say, that, when he first came over to Mexico, in 1519, he was thirty-four years old. (Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 205.) This would coincide with the age mentioned in the text.

his body was transported to the chapel of the monastery, San Isidro, in that city, where it was laid in the family vault of the duke of Medina Sidonia.[27] In the year 1562, it was removed, by order of his son, Don Martin, to New Spain, not, as directed by his will, to Cojohuacan, but to the monastery of St. Francis, in Tezcuco, where it was laid by the side of a daughter, and of his mother, Doña Catalina Pizarro. In 1629, the remains of Cortés were again removed; and on the death of Don Pedro, fourth marquess of the Valley, it was decided by the authorities of Mexico to transfer them to the church of St. Francis, in that capital. The ceremonial was conducted with the pomp suited to the occasion. A military and religious procession was formed, with the archbishop of Mexico at its head. He was accompanied by the great dignitaries of church and state, the various associations with their respective banners, the several religious fraternities, and the members of the Audience. The coffin containing the relics of Cortés, was covered with black velvet, and supported by the judges of the Royal tribunals. On either side of it was a man in complete armor, bearing, on the right, a standard of pure white, with the arms of Castile embroidered in gold, and, on the left, a banner of black velvet, emblazoned in like manner with the armorial ensigns of the house of Cortés. Behind the corpse came the viceroy and a numerous escort of Spanish cavaliers, and the rear was closed by a battalion of infantry, armed with pikes and arquebuses, and with their banners trailing on the ground. With this funeral pomp, by the sound of mournful music, and the slow beat of the muffled drum, the procession moved forward, with measured pace, till it reached the capital, when the gates were thrown open to receive the mortal remains of the hero, who, a century before, had performed there such prodigies of valor.

Yet his bones were not permitted to rest here undisturbed; and in 1794 they were removed to the Hospital of Jesus of Nazareth. It was a more fitting place, since it was the same institution, which, under the name of "Our Lady of the Conception," had been founded and endowed by Cortés, and which, with a fate not too frequent in similar charities, has been administered to this day on the noble principles of its foundation. The mouldering relics of the warrior, now deposited in a crystal coffin secured by bars and plates of silver, were laid in the chapel, and over them was raised a simple monument, displaying the arms of the family, and surmounted by a bust of the

[27] Noticia del Archivero de la Santa Eclesia de Sevilla, MS

Conqueror, executed in bronze by Tolsa, a sculptor worthy of the best period of the arts.[28]

Unfortunately for Mexico, the tale does not stop here. In 1823, the patriot mob of the capital, in their zeal to commemorate the era of the national independence, and their detestation of the "old Spaniards," prepared to break open the tomb which held the ashes of Cortés, and to scatter them to the winds! The authorities declined to interfere on the occasion; but the friends of the family, as is commonly reported, entered the vault by night, and, secretly removing the relics, prevented the commission of a sacrilege, which must have left a stain, not easy to be effaced, on the scutcheon of the fair city of Mexico.—Humboldt, forty years ago, remarked, that "we may traverse Spanish America from Buenos Ayres to Monterey, and in no quarter shall we meet with a national monument which the public gratitude has raised to Christopher Columbus, or Hernando Cortés"[29] It was reserved for our own age to conceive the design of violating the repose of the dead, and insulting their remains! Yet the men who meditated this outrage were not the descendants of Montezuma, avenging the wrongs of their fathers, and vindicating their own rightful inheritance. They were the descendants of the old Conquerors, and their countrymen, depending on the right of conquest for their ultimate title to the soil.

Cortés had no children by his first marriage. By his second he left four; a son, Don Martin,—the heir of his honors, and of persecutions even more severe than those of his father,[30]—and three daughters, who formed splendid alliances. He left, also, several natural children, whom he particularly mentions in his testament and honorably provides for. Two of these, Don Martin, the son of Marina, and Don Luis Cortés, attained con-

[28] The full particulars of the ceremony described in the text may be found in *Appendix*, *Part* 2, *No.* 16, translated into English, from a copy of the original document, existing in the Archives of the Hospital of Jesus, in Mexico.

[29] Essai Politique, tom. II. p. 60.

[30] Don Martin Cortés, second marquess of the Valley, was accused, like his father, of an attempt to establish an independent sovereignty in New Spain. His natural brothers, Don Martin and Don Luis, were involved in the same accusation with himself, and the former—as I have elsewhere remarked—was in consequence subjected to the torture. Several others of his friends, on charge of abetting his treasonable designs, suffered death. The marquess was obliged to remove with his family to Spain, where the investigation was conducted; and his large estates in Mexico were sequestered until the termination of the process, a period of seven years, from 1567 to 1574, when he was declared innocent. But his property suffered irreparable injury, under the wretched administration of the royal officers, during the term of sequestration.

siderable distinction, and were created *comendadores* of the Order of St. Jago.

The male line of the marquesses of the Valley became extinct in the fourth generation. The title and estates descended to a female, and by her marriage were united with those of the house of Terranova, descendants of the "Great Captain," Gonsalvo de Cordova. By a subsequent marriage they were carried into the family of the duke of Monteleone, a Neapolitan noble, The present proprietor of these princely honors and of vast domains, both in the Old and the New World, dwells in Sicily, and boasts a descent—such as few princes can boast—from two of the most illustrious commanders of the sixteenth century, the "Great Captain" and the Conqueror of Mexico.

The personal history of Cortés has been so minutely detailed in the preceding narrative, that it will be only necessary to touch on the more prominent features of his character. Indeed, the history of the Conquest, as I have already had occasion to remark, is necessarily that of Cortés, who is, if I may so say, not merely the soul, but the body, of the enterprise, present everywhere in person, in the thick of the fight, or in the building of the works, with his sword or with his musket, sometimes leading his soldiers, and sometimes directing his little navy. The negotiations, intrigues, correspondence, are all conducted by him; and, like Cæsar, he wrote his own Commentaries in the heat of the stirring scenes which form the subject of them. His character is marked with the most opposite traits, embracing qualities apparently the most incompatible. He was avaricious, yet liberal; bold to desperation, yet cautious and calculating in his plans; magnanimous, yet very cunning; courteous and affable in his deportment, yet inexorably stern; lax in his notions of morality, yet (not uncommon) a sad bigot. The great feature in his character was constancy of purpose; a constancy not to be daunted by danger, nor baffled by disappointment, nor wearied out by impediments and delays.

He was a knight-errant, in the literal sense of the word. Of all the band of adventurous cavaliers, whom Spain, in the sixteenth century, sent forth on the career of discovery and conquest, there was none more deeply filled with the spirit of romantic enterprise than Hernando Cortés. Dangers and difficulties, instead of deterring, seemed to have a charm in his eyes. They were necessary to rouse him to a full consciousness of his powers. He grappled with them at the outset, and, if I may so express myself, seemed to prefer to take his enterprises by the most difficult side. He conceived, at the first

moment of his landing in Mexico, the design of its conquest. When he saw the strength of its civilization, he was not turned from his purpose. When he was assailed by the superior force of Narvaez, he still persisted in it; and, when he was driven in ruin from the capital, he still cherished his original idea. How successfully he carried it into execution, we have seen. After the few years of repose which succeeded the Conquest, his adventurous spirit impelled him to that dreary march across the marshes of Chiapa; and, after another interval, to seek his fortunes on the stormy California Gulf. When he found that no other continent remained for him to conquer, he made serious proposals to the emperor to equip a fleet at his own expense, with which he would sail to the Moluccas, and subdue the Spice-Islands for the Crown of Castile![31]

This spirit of knight-errantry might lead us to undervalue his talents as a general, and to regard him merely in the light of a lucky adventurer. But this would be doing him injustice; for Cortés was certainly a great general, if that man be one, who performs great achievements with the resources which his own genius has created. There is probably no instance in history, where so vast an enterprise has been achieved by means apparently so inadequate. He may be truly said to have effected the Conquest by his own resources. If he was indebted for his success to the coöperation of the Indian tribes, it was the force of his genius that obtained command of such materials. He arrested the arm that was lifted to smite him, and made it do battle in his behalf. He beat the Tlascalans, and made them his stanch allies. He beat the soldiers of Narvaez, and doubled his effective force by it. When his own men deserted him, he did not desert himself. He drew them back by degrees, and compelled them to act by his will, till there were all as one man. He brought together the most miscellaneous collection of mercenaries who ever fought under one standard; adventurers from Cuba and the Isles, craving for gold; hidalgos, who came from the old country to win laurels; broken-down cavaliers, who hoped to mend their fortunes in the New World; vagabonds flying from justice; the grasping followers of Narvaez, and his own reckless veterans,—men with hardly a common tie,

[31] "Yo me ofresco á descubrir por aquí toda la especería, y otras Islas si huviere cerca de Moluco, ó Melaca, y la China, y aun de dar tal órden que V. M. no aiga la especería por via de rescate, como la ha el Rey de Portugal, sino que la tenga por cosa propria, y los naturales de aquellas Islas le reconoscan y sirvan como á su Rey y señor natural, porque yo me ofresco con el dicho additamento de embiar á ellas tal armada, *ó ir yo con mi persona por manera que la sojusge y pueble.*" Carta Quinta de Cortés, MS.

and burning with the spirit of jealousy and faction; wild tribes of the natives from all parts of the country, who had been sworn enemies from their cradles, and who had met only to cut one another's throats, and to procure victims for sacrifice; men, in short, differing in race, in language, and in interests, with scarcely anything in common among them. Yet this motley congregation was assembled in one camp, compelled to bend to the will of one man, to consort together in harmony, to breathe, as it were, one spirit, and to move on a common principle of action! It is in this wonderful power over the discordant masses thus gathered under his banner, that we recognize the genius of the great commander, no less than in the skill of his military operations.

His power over the minds of his soldiers was a natural result of their confidence in his abilities. But it is also to be attributed to his popular manners,—that happy union of authority and companionship, which fitted him for the command of a band of roving adventurers. It would not have done for him to have fenced himself round with the stately reserve of a commander of regular forces. He was embarked with his men in a common adventure, and nearly on terms of equality, since he held his commission by no legal warrant. But, while he indulged this freedom and familiarity with his soldiers, he never allowed it to interfere with their strict obedience, nor to impair the severity of discipline. When he had risen to higher consideration, although he affected more state, he still admitted his veterans to the same intimacy. "He preferred," says Diaz, "to be called 'Cortés' by us, to being called by any title; and with good reason," continues the enthusiastic old cavalier, "for the name of Cortés is as famous in our day as was that of Cæsar among the Romans, or of Hannibal among the Carthaginians." [32] He showed the same kind regards towards his ancient

[32] The comparison to Hannibal is better founded than the old soldier probably imagined. Livy's description of the Carthaginian warrior has a marvellous application to Cortés,—better, perhaps, than that of the imaginary personage quoted a few lines below in the text. "Plurimum audaciæ ad pericula capessenda, plurimum consilii inter ipsa pericula erat: nullo labore aut corpus fatigari, aut animus vinci poterat. Caloris ac frigoris patientia par: cibi potionisque desiderio naturali, non voluptate, modus finitus: vigiliarum somnique nec die, nec nocte discriminata tempora. Id, quod gerendis rebus superesset, quieti datum; ea neque molli strato, neque silentio arcessita. Multi sæpe militari sagulo opertum, humi jacentem, inter custodias stationesque militum, conspexerunt. Vestitus nihil inter æquales excellens; arma atque equi conspiciebantur. Equitum peditumque idem longe primus erat; princeps in prœlium ibat; ultimus conserto prœlio excedebat." (Hist., lib. xxi. sec. 5.) The reader, who reflects on the fate of Guatemozin, may possibly think that the extract should have embraced the "perfidia plus quàm Punica," in the succeeding sentence.

comrades in the very last act of his life. For he appropriated a sum by his will for the celebration of two thousand masses for the souls of those who had fought with him in the campaigns of Mexico,[88]

His character has been unconsciously traced by the hand of a master.

> "And oft *the chieftain* deigned to aid
> And mingle in the mirth they made;
> For, though, with men of high degree,
> The proudest of the proud was he,
> Yet, trained in camps, he knew the art
> To win the soldiers' hardy heart.
> They love a captain to obey,
> Boisterous as March, yet fresh as May;
> With open hand, and brow as free,
> Lover of wine, and minstrelsy;
> Ever the first to scale a tower,
> As venturous in a lady's bower;—
> Such buxom chief shall lead his host
> From India's fires to Zembla's frost."

Cortés, without much violence, might have sat for this portrait of Marmion.

Cortés was not a vulgar conqueror. He did not conquer from the mere ambition of conquest. If he destroyed the ancient capital of the Aztecs, it was to build up a more magnificent capital on its ruins. If he desolated the land, and broke up its existing institutions, he employed the short period of his administration in digesting schemes for introducing there a more improved culture and a higher civilization. In all his expeditions he was careful to study the resources of the country, its social organization, and its physical capacities. He enjoined it on his captains to attend particularly to these objects. If he was greedy of gold, like most of the Spanish cavaliers in the New World, it was not to hoard it, nor merely to lavish it in the support of a princely establishment, but to secure funds for prosecuting his glorious discoveries. Witness his costly expeditions to the Gulf of California. His enterprises were not undertaken solely for mercenary objects; as is shown by the various expeditions he set on foot for the discovery of a communication between the Atlantic and the Pacific. In his schemes of ambition he showed a respect for the interests of science, to be referred partly to the natural superiority of his mind, but partly, no doubt, to the influence of early education. It is, indeed, hardly possible, that a person of his wayward and mercurial temper should have improved his advantages at the

[88] Testamento de Hernan Cortés, MS.

University, but he brought away from it a tincture of scholarship, seldom found among the cavaliers of the period, and which had its influence in enlarging his own conceptions. His celebrated Letters are written with a simple elegance, that, as I have already had occasion to remark, have caused them to be compared to the military narrative of Cæsar. It will not be easy to find in the chronicles of the period a more concise, yet comprehensive, statement, not only of the events of his campaigns, but of the circumstances most worthy of notice in the character of the conquered countries.

Cortés was not cruel; at least, not cruel as compared with most of those who followed his iron trade. The path of the conqueror is necessarily marked with blood. He was not too scrupulous, indeed, in the execution of his plans. He swept away the obstacles which lay in his track; and his fame is darkened by the commission of more than one act which his boldest apologists will find it hard to vindicate. But he was not wantonly cruel. He allowed no outrage on his unresisting foes. This may seem small praise, but it is an exception to the usual conduct of his countrymen in their conquests, and it is something to be in advance of one's time. He was severe, it may be added, in enforcing obedience to his orders for protecting their persons and their property. With his licentious crew, it was, sometimes, not without hazard that he was so. After the Conquest, he sanctioned the system of *repartimientos;* but so did Columbus. He endeavored to regulate it by the most humane laws, and continued to suggest many important changes for ameliorating the condition of the natives. The best commentary on his conduct, in this respect, is the deference that was shown him by the Indians, and the confidence with which they appealed to him for protection in all their subsequent distresses.

In private life he seems to have had the power of attaching to himself, warmly, those who were near his person. The influence of this attachment is shown in every page of Bernal Diaz, though his work was written to vindicate the claims of the soldiers, in opposition to those of the general. He seems to have led a happy life with his first wife, in their humble retirement in Cuba; and regarded the second, to judge from the expressions in his testament, with confidence and love. Yet he cannot be acquitted from the charge of those licentious gallantries which entered too generally into the character of the military adventurer of that day. He would seem also, by the frequent suits in which he was involved, to have been of an irritable and contentious spirit. But much allowance must be made for the irritability of a man who had been too long accustomed to indepen-

dent sway, patiently to endure the checks and control of the petty spirits who were incapable of comprehending the noble character of his enterprises. "He thought," says an eminent writer, "to silence his enemies by the brilliancy of the new career on which he had entered. He did not reflect, that these enemies had been raised by the very grandeur and rapidity of his success."[34] He was rewarded for his efforts by the misinterpretation of his motives; by the calumnious charges of squandering the public revenues and of aspiring to independent sovereignty. But, although we may admit the foundation of many of the grievances alleged by Cortés, yet, when we consider the querulous tone of his correspondence and the frequency of his litigation, we may feel a natural suspicion that his proud spirit was too sensitive to petty slights, and too jealous of imaginary wrongs.

One trait more remains to be noticed in the character of this remarkable man; that is, his bigotry, the failing of the age,—for, surely, it should be termed only a failing.[35] When we see the hand, red with the blood of the wretched native, raised to invoke the blessing of Heaven on the cause which it maintains, we experience something like a sensation of disgust at the act, and a doubt of its sincerity. But this is unjust. We should throw ourselves back (it cannot be too often repeated) into the age; the age of the Crusades. For every Spanish cavalier, however sordid and selfish might be his private motives, felt himself to be the soldier of the Cross. Many of them would have died in defence of it. Whoever has read the correspondence of Cortés, or, still more, has attended to the circumstances of his career, will hardly doubt that he would have been among the first to lay down his life for the Faith. He more than once perilled life and fortune, and the success of his whole enterprise, by the premature and most impolitic manner in which he would have forced conversion on the natives.[36] To the more rational

[34] Humboldt, Essai politique, tom. II, p. 267.

[35] An extraordinary anecdote is related by Cavo, of this bigotry (shall we call it policy?) of Cortés. "In Mexico," says the historian, "it is commonly reported, that, after the Conquest, he commanded, that on Sundays and holidays all should attend, under pain of a certain number of stripes, to the expounding of the Scriptures. The general was himself guilty of an omission, on one occasion, and, after having listened to the admonition of the priest, submitted, with edifying humility, to be chastised by him, to the unspeakable amazement of the Indians!" Hist. de los Tres Siglos, tom. I. p. 151.

[36] "Al Rey infinitas tierras,
Y a Dios infinitas almas,"

says Lope de Vega, commemorating in this couplet the double glory of Cortés. It is the light in which the Conquest was viewed by every devout Spaniard of the sixteenth century.

spirit of the present day, enlightened by a purer Christianity, it may seem difficult to reconcile gross deviations from morals with such devotion to the cause of religion. But the religion taught in that day was one of form and elaborate ceremony. In the punctilious attention to discipline, the spirit of Christianity was permitted to evaporate. The mind, occupied with forms, thinks little of substance. In a worship that is addressed too exclusively to the senses, it is often the case, that morality becomes divorced from religion, and the measure of righteousness is determined by the creed rather than by the conduct.

In the earlier part of the History, I have given a description of the person of Cortés.[37] It may be well to close this review of his character by the account of his manners and personal habits left us by Bernal Diaz, the old chronicler, who has accompanied us through the whole course of our narrative, and who may now fitly furnish the conclusion of it. No man knew his commander better; and, if the avowed object of his work might naturally lead to a disparagement of Cortés, this is more than counterbalanced by the warmth of his personal attachment, and by that *esprit de corps* which leads him to take a pride in the renown of his general.

"In his whole appearance and presence," says Diaz, "in his discourse, his table, his dress, in everything, in short, he had the air of a great lord. His clothes were in the fashion of the time; he set little value on silk, damask, or velvet, but dressed plainly and exceedingly neat;[38] nor did he wear massy chains of gold, but simply a fine one, of exquisite workmanship, from which was suspended a jewel having the figure of our Lady the Virgin and her precious Son, with a Latin motto cut upon it. On his finger he wore a splendid diamond ring; and from his cap, which, according to the fashion of that day, was of velvet, hung a medal, the device of which I do not remember. He was magnificently attended, as became a man of his rank, with chamberlains and major-domos and many pages; and the service of his table was splendid, with a quantity of both gold and silver plate. At noon he dined heartily, drinking about a pint of wine mixed with water. He supped well, though he was not dainty in regard to his food, caring little for the delicacies of the table, unless, indeed, on such occasions as made attention to these matters of some consequence.[39]

[37] Ante, Vol. I. p. 170.

[38] So Gomara: "Vestia mas pulido que rico. Era hombre limpísimo." Crónica, cap. 238.

[39] "Fué mui gran comedor, i templado en el beber, teniendo abundancia. Sufria mucho la hambre con necesidad." Ibid., ubi supra.

"He was acquainted with Latin, and, as I have understood, was made Bachelor of Laws; and, when he conversed with learned men who addressed him in Latin, he answered them in the same language. He was also something of a poet; his conversation was agreeable, and he had a pleasant elocution. In his attendance on the services of the Church he was most punctual, devout in his manner, and charitable to the poor.[40]

"When he swore, he used to say, 'On my conscience'; and when he was vexed with any one, 'Evil betide you.' With his men he was very patient; and they were sometimes impertinent and even insolent. When very angry, the veins in his throat and forehead would swell, but he uttered no reproaches against either officer or soldier.

"He was fond of cards and dice, and, when he played, was always in good humor, indulging freely in jests and repartees. He was affable with his followers, especially with those who came over with him from Cuba. In his campaigns he paid strict attention to discipline, frequently going the rounds himself during the night, and seeing that the sentinels did their duty. He entered the quarters of his soldiers without ceremony, and chided those whom he found without their arms and accoutrements, saying, 'It was a bad sheep that could not carry its own wool.' On the expedition to Honduras he acquired the habit of sleeping after his meals, feeling unwell if he omitted it; and, however sultry or stormy the weather, he caused a carpet or his cloak to be thrown under a tree, and slept soundly for some time. He was frank and exceedingly liberal in his disposition, until the last few years of his life, when he was accused of parsimony. But we should consider that his funds were employed on great and costly enterprises; and that none of these, after the Conquest, neither his expedition to Honduras, nor his voyages to California, were crowned with success. It was perhaps intended that he should receive his recompense in a better world; and I fully believe it; for he was a good cavalier, most true in his devotions to the Virgin, to the Apostle St. Peter, and to all the other Saints."[41]

Such is the portrait, which has been left to us by the faithful hand most competent to trace it, of Hernando Cortés, the Conqueror of Mexico.

[40] He dispensed a thousand ducats every year in his ordinary charities, according to Gomara. "Grandísimo limosnero; daba cada un año mil ducados de limosna ordinaria." Ibid., ubi supra.

[41] Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 203.

APPENDIX.

PART I.

ORIGIN OF THE MEXICAN CIVILIZATION.

PRELIMINARY NOTICE.

The following Essay was originally designed to close the Introductory Book, to which it properly belongs. It was written three years since, at the same time with that part of the work. I know of no work of importance, having reference to the general subject of discussion, which has appeared since that period, except Mr. Bradford's valuable treatise on *American Antiquities*. But, in respect to that part of the discussion which treats of American Architecture, a most important contribution has been made by Mr. Stephens's two works, containing the account of his visits to Central America and Yucatan, and especially by the last of these publications. Indeed, the ground, before so imperfectly known, has now been so diligently explored, that we have all the light, which we can reasonably expect, to aid us in making up our opinion in regard to the mysterious monuments of Yucatan. It only remains, that the exquisite illustrations of Mr. Catherwood should be published on a larger scale, like the great works on the subject in France and England, in order to exhibit to the eye a more adequate representation of these magnificent ruins, than can be given in the limited compass of an octavo page.

But, notwithstanding the importance of Mr. Stephens's researches, I have not availed myself of them to make any additions to the original draft of this Essay, nor have I rested my conclusions in any instance on his authority. These conclusions had been formed from a careful study of the narratives of Dupaix and Waldeck, together with that of their splendid illustrations of the remains of Palenque and Uxmal, two of the principal places explored by Mr. Stephens ; and the additional facts, collected by him from the vast field which he has surveyed, so far from shaking my previous deductions, have only served to con-

firm them. The only object of my own speculations on these remains was, to ascertain their probable origin, or rather to see what light, if any, they could throw on the origin of Aztec Civilization. The reader, on comparing my reflections with those of Mr. Stephens in the closing chapters of his two works, will see that I have arrived at inferences, as to the origin and probable antiquity of these structures, precisely the same as his. Conclusions, formed under such different circumstances, serve to corroborate each other ; and, although the reader will find here some things which would have been different, had I been guided by the light now thrown on the path, yet I prefer not to disturb the foundations on which the argument stands, nor to impair its value,—if it has any,—as a distinct and independent testimony.

APPENDIX, PART I.

ORIGIN OF THE MEXICAN CIVILIZATION.—ANALOGIES WITH THE OLD WORLD.

When the Europeans first touched the shores of America, it was as if they had alighted on another planet,—every thing there was so different from what they had before seen. They were introduced to new varieties of plants, and to unknown races of animals ; while man, the lord of all, was equally strange, in complexion, language, and institutions.[1] It was what they emphatically styled it, a New World. Taught by their faith to derive all created beings from one source, they felt a natural perplexity as to the manner in which these distant and insulated regions could have obtained their inhabitants. The same curiosity was felt by their countrymen at home, and the European scholars bewildered their brains with speculations on the best way of solving this interesting problem.

In accounting for the presence of animals there, some imagined that the two hemispheres might once have been joined in the extreme North, so as to have afforded an easy communication.[2] Others, embarrassed by the difficulty of transporting inhabitants of the tropics across the Arctic regions, revived the old story of Plato's Atlantis, that huge island, now submerged, which might have stretched from the shores of Africa to the

[1] The names of many animals in the New World, indeed, have been frequently borrowed from the Old; but the species are very different. "When the Spaniards landed in America," says an eminent naturalist, "they did not find a single animal they were acquainted with ; not one of the quadrupeds of Europe, Asia, or Africa." Lawrence, Lectures on Physiology, Zoology, and the Natural History of Man, (London, 1819,) p. 250.

[2] Acosta, lib. 1, cap. 16.

eastern borders of the new continent ; while they saw vestiges of a similar convulsion of nature in the green islands sprinkled over the Pacific, once the mountain summits of a vast continent, now buried beneath the waters.[3] Some, distrusting the existence of revolutions, of which no record was preserved, suppose that animals might have found their way across the ocean by various means ; the birds of stronger wing by flight over the narrowest spaces ; while the tamer kinds of quadrupeds might easily have been transported by men in boats, and even the more ferocious, as tigers, bears, and the like, have been brought over in the same manner, when young, "for amusement and the pleasure of the chase"![4] Others, again, maintained the equally probable opinion, that angels, who had, doubtless, taken charge of them in the ark, had also superintended their distribution afterwards over the different parts of the globe.[5] Such were the extremities to which even thinking minds were reduced, in their eagerness to reconcile the literal interpretation of Scripture with the phenomena of nature! The philosophy of a later day conceives that it is no departure from this sacred authority to follow the suggestions of science, by referring the new tribes of animals to a creation, since the deluge, in those places for which they were clearly intended by constitution and habits.[6]

Man would not seem to present the same embarrassments, in the discussion, as the inferior orders. He is fitted by nature for every climate, the burning sun of the tropics and the icy atmosphere of the North. He wanders indifferently over the sands of the desert, the waste of polar snows, and the pathless ocean. Neither mountains nor seas intimidate him, and, by the aid of mechanical contrivances, he accomplishes journeys which birds of boldest wing would perish in attempting. Without ascending to the high northern latitudes, where the continents of Asia and America approach within fifty miles of each other, it would be easy for the inhabitant of Eastern Tartary or Japan to steer his

[3] Count Carli shows much ingenuity and learning in support of the famous Egyptian tradition, recorded by Plato, in his "Timæus,"—of the good faith of which the Italian philosopher nothing doubts. Lettres Américaines, tom. II. let. 36–39.

[4] Garcia, Orígen de los Indios de el Nuevo Mundo, (Madrid, 1729,) cap. 4.

[5] Torquemada Monarch. Ind., lib. 1, cap. 8.

[6] Prichard, Researches into the Physical History of Mankind, (London, 1826,) vol. I. p. 81, et seq.

He may find an orthodox authority of respectable antiquity, for a similar hypothesis, in St. Augustine, who plainly intimates his belief, that, "as by God's command, at the time of the creation, the earth brought forth the living creature after his kind, so a similar process must have taken place after the deluge, in islands too remote to be reached by animals from the continent." De Civitate Dei, ap. Opera, (Parisiis, 1636,) tom. V. p. 987.

canoe from islet to islet, quite across to the American shore, without ever being on the ocean more than two days at a time.[7] The communication is somewhat more difficult on the Atlantic side. But even there, Iceland was occupied by colonies of Europeans many hundred years before the discovery by Columbus; and the transit from Iceland to America is comparatively easy.[8] Independently of these channels, others were opened in the southern hemisphere, by means of the numerous islands in the Pacific. The population of America is not nearly so difficult a problem, as that of these little spots. But experience shows how practicable the communication may have been, even with such sequestered places.[9] The savage has been picked up in his canoe, after drifting hundreds of leagues on the open ocean, and sustaining life, for months, by the rain from heaven, and such fish as he could catch.[10] The instances are not very rare; and it would be strange, if these wandering barks should not sometimes have been intercepted by the great continent, which stretches across the globe, in unbroken continuity, almost from pole to pole. No doubt, history could reveal to us more than one example of men, who, thus driven upon the American shores, have mingled their blood with that of the primitive races who occupied them.

The real difficulty is not, as with the animals, to explain how man could have reached America, but from what quarter he

[7] Beechey, Voyage to the Pacific and Beering's Strait, (London, 1831,) Part 2, Appendix.—Humboldt, Examen Critique de l'Histoire de la Géographie du Nouveau Continent, (Paris, 1837,) tom. II. p. 58.

[8] Whatever skepticism may have been entertained as to the visit of the Northmen, in the eleventh century, to the coasts of the great continent, it is probably set at rest in the minds of most scholars, since the publication of the original documents, by the Royal Society at Copenhagen. (See, in particular, Antiquitates Americanæ, (Hafuiæ, 1837,) pp. 79–200.) How far south they penetrated is not so easily settled.

[9] The most remarkable example, probably, of a direct intercourse between remote points, is furnished us by Captain Cook, who found the inhabitants of New Zealand not only with the same religion, but speaking the same language, as the people of Otaheite, distant more than 2,000 miles. The comparison of the two vocabularies establishes the fact. Cook's Voyages, (Dublin, 1784,) vol. I. book 1, chap. 8.

[10] The eloquent Lyell closes an enumeration of some extraordinary and well-attested instances of this kind with remarking, "Were the whole of mankind now cut off, with the exception of one family, inhabiting the old or new continent, or Australia, or even some coral islet of the Pacific, we should expect their descendants, though they should never become more enlightened than the South-Sea Islanders or the Esquimaux, to spread, in the course of ages, over the whole earth, diffused partly by the tendency of population to increase beyond the means of subsistence in a limited district, and partly by the accidental drifting of canoes by tides and currents to distant shores." Principles of Geology, (London, 1832,) vol. II. p. 121.

actually has reached it. In surveying the whole extent of the New World, it was found to contain two great families, one in the lowest stage of civilization, composed of hunters, and another nearly as far advanced in refinement as the semi-civilized empires of Asia. The more polished races were probably unacquainted with the existence of each other on the different continents of America, and had as little intercourse with the barbarian tribes, by whom they were surrounded. Yet they had some things in common both with these last and with one another, which remarkably distinguished them from the inhabitants of the Old World. They had a common complexion and physical organization,—at least, bearing a more uniform character than is found among the nations of any other quarter of the globe. They had some usages and institutions in common, and spoke languages of similar construction, curiously distinguished from those in the eastern hemisphere.

Whence did the refinement of these more polished races come? Was it only a higher development of the same Indian character, which we see, in the more northern latitudes, defying every attempt at permanent civilization? Was it engrafted on a race of higher order in the scale originally, but self-instructed, working its way upward by its own powers? Was it, in short, an indigenous civilization? or was it borrowed in some degree from the nations in the Eastern World? If indigenous, how are we to explain the singular coincidence with the East in institutions and opinions? If Oriental, how shall we account for the great dissimilarity in language, and for the ignorance of some of the most simple and useful arts, which, once known, it would seem scarcely possible should have been forgotten? This is the riddle of the Sphinx, which no Œdipus has yet had the ingenuity to solve. It is, however, a question of deep interest to every curious and intelligent observer of his species. And it has accordingly occupied the thoughts of men, from the first discovery of the country to the present time; when the extraordinary monuments brought to light in Central America have given a new impulse to inquiry, by suggesting the probability, —the possibility, rather,—that surer evidences than any hitherto known might be afforded for establishing the fact of a positive communication with the other hemisphere.

It is not my intention to add many pages to the volumes already written on this inexhaustible topic. The subject—as remarked by a writer of a philosophical mind himself, and who has done more than any other for the solution of the mystery—is of too speculative a nature for history, almost for philoso-

phy.[11] But this work would be incomplete, without affording the reader the means of judging for himself as to the true sources of the peculiar civilization already described, by exhibiting to him the alleged points of resemblance with the ancient continent. In doing this, I shall confine myself to my proper subject, the Mexicans, or to what, in some way or other, may have a bearing on this subject; proposing to state only real points of resemblance, as they are supported by evidence, and stripped, as far as possible, of the illusions with which they have been invested by the pious credulity of one party, and the visionary system-building of another.

An obvious analogy is found in *cosmogonal traditions* and *religious usages*. The reader has already been made acquainted with the Aztec system of four great cycles, at the end of each of which the world was destroyed, to be again regenerated.[12] The belief in these periodical convulsions of nature, through the agency of some one or other of the elements, was familiar to many countries in the eastern hemisphere; and, though varying in detail, the general resemblance of outline furnishes an argument in favor of a common origin.[13]

No tradition has been more widely spread among nations than that of a Deluge. Independently of tradition, indeed, it would seem to be naturally suggested by the interior structure of the earth, and by the elevated places on which marine substances are found to be deposited. It was the received notion under some form or other, of the most civilized people in the Old World, and of the barbarians of the new.[14] The Aztecs com-

[11] La question générale de la première origine des habitans d'un continent est audelà des limites prescrites à l'histoire; peut-être même n'est-elle pas une question philosophique." Humboldt, Essai Politique, tom. I. p. 349.

[12] Ante, Vol. I. p. 61.

[13] The fanciful division of time into four or five cycles or ages was found among the Hindoos, (Asiatic Researches, vol. II. mem. 7,) the Thibetians, (Humboldt, Vues des Cordillères, p. 210,) the Persians, (Bailly, Traité de l'Astronomie, (Paris, 1787,) tom. I. discours préliminaire,) the Greeks, (Hesiod, Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι, v. 108, et seq.,) and other people, doubtless. The five ages in the Grecian cosmogony had reference to moral, rather than physical phenomena,—a proof of higher civilization.

[14] The Chaldean and Hebrew accounts of the Deluge are nearly the same. The parallel is pursued in Palfrey's ingenious Lectures on the Jewish Scriptures and Antiquities, (Boston 1840.) vol. II. lect. 21, 22. Among the Pagan writers, none approach so near to the Scripture narrative as Lucian, who, in his account of the Greek traditions, speaks of the ark, and the pairs of different kinds of animals. (De Deâ Syriâ, sec. 12.) The same thing is found in the Bhagawatn Purana, a Hindoo poem of great antiquity. (Asiatic Researches, vol. II. mem. 7.) The simple tradition of a universal inundation was preserved among most of the Aborigines, probably of the Western World. See McCulloh, Researches, p. 147.

bined with this some particular circumstances of a more arbitrary character, resembling the accounts of the East. They believed that two persons survived the deluge, a man, named Coxcox, and his wife. Their heads are represented in ancient paintings, together with a boat floating on the waters, at the foot of a mountain. A dove is also depicted, with the hieroglyphical emblem of languages in his mouth, which he is distributing to the children of Coxcox, who were born dumb.[15] The neighboring people of Michuacan, inhabiting the same high plains of the Andes, had a still further tradition, that the boat, in which Tezpi, their Noah, escaped, was filled with various kinds of animals and birds. After some time, a vulture was sent out from it, but remained feeding on the dead bodies of the giants, which had been left on the earth, as the waters subsided. The little humming-bird, *huitzitzilin*, was then sent forth, and returned with a twig in its mouth. The coincidence of both these accounts with the Hebrew and Chaldean narratives is obvious. It were to be wished that the authority for the Michuacan version were more satisfactory.[16]

On the way between Vera Cruz and the capital, not far from the modern city of Puebla, stands the venerable relic,—with which the reader has become familiar in the course of the narrative,—called the temple of Cholula. It is, as he will remember, a pyramidal mound, built, or rather cased, with unburnt brick, rising to the height of nearly one hundred and eighty feet. The popular tradition of the natives is, that it was erected by a family

[15] This tradition of the Aztecs is recorded in an ancient hieroglyphical map, first published in Gemelli Carreri's Giro del Mondo. (See tom. VI. p. 38, ed. Napoli, 1700.) Its authenticity, as well as the integrity of Carreri himself, on which some suspicions have been thrown, (see Robertson's America, (London, 1796, vol. III, note 26.) has been successfully vindicated by Boturini, Clavigero, and Humboldt, all of whom trod in the steps of the Italian traveller. (Boturini, Idea, p. 54.—Humboldt, Vues des Cordillères, pp. 223, 224.—Clavigero, Stor. del Messico, tom. I. p. 24.) The map is a copy from one in the curious collection of Siguenza. It has all the character of a genuine Aztec picture, with the appearance of being retouched, especially in the costumes, by some later artist. The painting of the four ages, in the Vatican codex, No. 3730, represents also the two figures in the boat, escaping the great cataclysm. Antiq. of Mexico, vol. I. Pl. 7.

[16] I have met with no other voucher for this remarkable tradition than Clavigero; (Stor. del Messico, dissert. 1;) a good, though certainly not the best, authority, when he gives us no reason for our faith. Humboldt, however, does not distrust the tradition. (See Vues des Cordillères, p. 226.) He is not so skeptical as Vater; who, in allusion to the stories of the Flood, remarks, "I have purposely omitted noticing the resemblance of religious notions, for I do not see how it is possible to separate from such views every influence of Christian ideas, if it be only from an imperceptible confusion in the mind of the narrator." Mithridates, oder allgemeine Sprachenkunde, (Berlin, 1812,) theil III, abteeil 3, p. 82, note.

of giants, who had escaped the great inundation, and designed to raise the building to the clouds; but the gods, offended with their presumption, sent fires from heaven on the pyramid, and compelled them to abandon the attempt.[17] The partial coincidence of this legend with the Hebrew account of the tower of Babel, received, also, by other nations of the East, cannot be denied.[18] But one who has not examined the subject, will scarcely credit what bold hypotheses have been reared on this slender basis.

Another point of coincidence is found in the goddess Cioacoatl, "our lady and mother"; "the first goddess who brought forth"; "who bequeathed the sufferings of childbirth to women, as the tribute of death"; "by whom sin came into the world." Such was the remarkable language applied by the Aztecs to this venerated deity. She was usually represented with a serpent near her; and her name signified the "serpent-woman." In all this we see much to remind us of the mother of the human family, the Eve of the Hebrew and Syrian nations.[19]

[17] This story, so irreconcilable with the vulgar Aztec tradition, which admits only two survivors of the Deluge, was still lingering among the natives of the place, on M. de Humboldt's visit there. (Vues des Cordillères, pp, 31, 32.) It agrees with that given by the interpreter of the Vatican Codex; (Antiq. of Mexico, vol. VI. p. 192, et seq.;) a writer,—probably a monk of the sixteenth century,—in whom ignorance and dogmatism contend for mastery. See a precious specimen of both, in his account of the Aztec chronology, in the very pages above referred to.

[18] A tradition, very similar to the Hebrew one, existed among the Chaldeans and the Hindoos. (Asiatic Researches, vol. III. mem. 16.) The natives of Chiapa, also, according to the bishop Nuñez de la Vega, had a story, cited as genuine by Humboldt, (Vues des Cordillères, p. 148,) which not only agrees with the Scripture account of the manner in which Babel was built, but with that of the subsequent dispersion, and the confusion of tongues. A very marvellous coincidence! But who shall vouch for the authenticity of the tradition? The bishop flourished towards the close of the seventeenth century. He drew his information from hieroglyphical maps, and an Indian MS., which Boturini in vain endeavored to recover. In exploring these, he borrowed the aid of the natives, who, as Boturini informs us, frequently led the good man into errors and absurdities; of which he gives several specimens. (Idea, p. 116, et seq.)—Boturini himself has fallen into an error equally great, in regard to a map of this same Cholulan pyramid; which Clavigero shows, far from being a genuine antique, was the forgery of a later day. (Stor. del Messico, tom. I. p. 130, nota.) It is impossible to get a firm footing in the quicksands of tradition. The further we are removed from the Conquest, the more difficult it becomes to decide what belongs to the primitive Aztec, and what to the Christian convert.

[19] Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva España, lib. 1, cap. 6; lib. 6, cap. 28, 33.

Torquemada, not content with the honest record of his predecessor, whose MS. lay before him, tells us, that the Mexican Eve had two sons, Cain and Abel, (Monarch. Ind., lib. 6, cap. 31.) The ancient interpreters of the Vatican and Tellerian Codices add the further tradition, of her bringing sin

But none of the deities of the country suggested such astonishing analogies with Scripture, as Quetzalcoatl, with whom the reader has already been made acquainted.[20] He was the white man, wearing a long beard, who came from the East; and who, after presiding over the golden age of Anahuac, disappeared as mysteriously as he had come, on the great Atlantic Ocean. As he promised to return at some future day, his reappearance was looked for with confidence by each succeeding generation. There is little in these circumstances to remind one of Christianity. But the curious antiquaries of Mexico found out, that to this god were to be referred the institution of ecclesiastical communities, reminding one of the monastic societies of the Old World; that of the rites of confession and penance; and the knowledge even of the great doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation![21] One party, with pious industry, accumulated proofs to establish his identity with the Apostle St. Thomas;[22] while another, with less scrupulous faith, saw, in his anticipated advent to regenerate the nation, the type, dim-veiled, of the Messiah![23]

Yet we should have charity for the missionaries who first landed in this world of wonders; where, while man and nature wore so strange an aspect, they were astonished by occasional glimpses of rites and ceremonies, which reminded them of a purer faith. In their amazement, they did not reflect, whether these things were not the natural expression of the religious feeling common to all nations who have reached even a moderate civilization. They did not inquire, whether the same things were not practised by other idolatrous people. They could not suppress their wonder, as they beheld the Cross, the sacred em-

and sorrow into the world by plucking the forbidden *rose;* (Antiq. of Mexico, vol. VI., explan. of Pl. 7, 20;) and Veytia remembers to have seen a Toltec or Aztec map, representing a garden with a single tree in it, round which was coiled the serpent with a human face! (Hist Antig., lib. 1, cap. 1.) After this we may be prepared for Lord Kingsborough's deliberate conviction, that the "Aztecs had a clear knowledge of the Old Testament, and, most probably, of the New, though somewhat corrupted by time, and hieroglyphics"! Antiq. of Mexico, vol. VI. p. 409.

[20] Ante, Vol. I. pp. 59, 60.

[21] Veytia, Hist. Antig., lib. 1, cap. 15.

[22] Ibid., lib. 1, cap. 19.—A sorry argument, even for a casuist. See, also, the elaborate dissertation of Dr. Mier, (apud Sahagun, lib. 3, Suplem.,) which settles the question entirely to the satisfaction of his reporter, Bustamante.

[23] See, among others, Lord Kingsborough's reading of the Borgian codex, and the interpreters of the Vatican, (Antiq. of Mexico, Vol. VI., explan of Pl. 3, 10, 41,) equally well skilled with his lordship,—and Sir Hudibras,—in unravelling mysteries:

> "Whose primitive tradition reaches,
> As far as Adam's first green breeches."

blem of their own faith, raised as an object of worship in the temples of Anahuac. They met with it in various places; and the image of a cross may be seen at this day, sculptured in bas-relief, on the walls of one of the buildings of Palenque, while a figure bearing some resemblance to that of a child is held up to it, as if in adoration.[24]

Their surprise was heightened, when they witnessed a religious rite which reminded them of the Christian communion. On these occasions, an image of the tutelary deity of the Aztecs was made of the flour of maize, mixed with blood, and after consecration by the priests, was distributed among the people, who, as they ate it, "showed signs of humiliation and sorrow, declaring it was the flesh of the deity!"[25] How could the Roman Catholic fail to recognize the awful ceremony of the Eucharist?

With the same feelings they witnessed another ceremony, that of the Aztec baptism; in which, after a solemn invocation, the head and lips of the infant were touched with water, and a name was given to it; while the goddess Cioacoatl, who presided over childbirth, was implored, "that the sin, which was given to us before the beginning of the world, might not visit the child, but that, cleansed by these waters, it might live and be born anew!"[26]

[24] Antiquités Mexicaínes, exped. 3, Pl. 36.
The figures are surrounded by hieroglyphics of most arbitrary character, perhaps phonetic. (See also Herrera, Hist. General, dec. 2, lib. 3, cap. 1.—Gomara, Crónica de la Nueva España, cap. 15, ap. Barcia, tom. II.) [Mr. Stephens considers that the celebrated "Cozumel Cross," preserved at Merida, which claims the credit of being the same originally worshipped by the natives of Cozumel, is, after all, nothing but a cross that was erected by the Spaniards in one of their own temples in that island after the Conquest. This fact he regards as "completely invalidating the strongest proof offered at this day, that the Cross was recognized by the Indians as a symbol of worship." (Travels in Yucatan, vol. II. chap. 20.) But, admitting the truth of this statement, that the Cozumel Cross is only a Christian relic, which the ingenious traveller has made extremely probable, his inference is by no means admissible. Nothing could be more natural than that the friars in Merida should endeavor to give celebrity to their convent by making it the possessor of so remarkable a monument as the very relic which proved, in their eyes, that Christianity had been preached at some earlier date among the natives. But the real proof of the existence of the Cross, as an object of worship, in the New World, does not rest on such spurious monuments as these, but on the unequivocal testimony of the Spanish discoverers themselves.]

[25] "Lo recibian con gran reverencia, humiliacion, y lágrimas, diciendo que comian la carne de su Dios." Veytia, Hist. Antig., lib. 1, cap. 18.—Also, Acosta, lib. 5, cap. 24.

[26] Ante, Vol. I., p. 64.—Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva España, lib. 6, cap. 37.
That the reader may see, for himself, how like, yet how unlike, the Aztec

It is true, these several rites were attended with many peculiarities, very unlike those in any Christian church. But the fathers fastened their eyes exclusively on the points of resemblance. They were not aware, that the Cross was the symbol of worship, of the highest antiquity, in Egypt and Syria;[27] and that rites, resembling those of communion[28] and baptism, were practised by Pagan nations, on whom the light of Christianity had

rite was to the Christian, I give the translation of Sahagun's account, at length.

"When every thing necessary for the baptism had been made ready, all the relations of the child were assembled, and the midwife, who was the person that performed the rite of baptism, was summoned. At early dawn, they met together in the court-yard of the house. When the sun had risen, the midwife, taking the child in her arms, called for a little earthen vessel of water, while those about her placed the ornaments which had been prepared for the baptism in the midst of the court. To perform the rite of baptism, she placed herself with her face towards the west, and immediately began to go through certain ceremonies. . . . . After this she sprinkled water on the head of the infant, saying, 'O, my child! take and receive the water of the Lord of the world, which is our life, and is given for the increasing and renewing of our body. It is to wash and purify. I pray that these heavenly drops may enter into your body, and dwell there; that they may destroy and remove from you all the evil and sin which was given to you before the beginning of the world; since all of us are under its power, being all the children of Chalchivitlycue' [the goddess of water]. She then washed the body of the child with water, and spoke in this manner: 'Whencesoever thou comest, thou that art hurtful to this child; leave him and depart from him, for he now liveth anew, and is born anew; now he is purified and cleansed afresh, and our mother Chalchivitlycue again bringeth him into the world.' Having thus prayed, the midwife took the child in both hands, and, lifting him towards heaven, said, 'O Lord, thou seest here thy creature, whom thou hast sent into this world, this place of sorrow, suffering, and penitence. Grant him, O Lord, thy gifts, and thine inspiration, for thou art the Great God, and with thee is the great goddess.' Torches of pine were kept burning during the performance of these ceremonies. When these things were ended, they gave the child the name of some one of his ancestors, in the hope that he might shed a new lustre over it. The name was given by the same midwife, or priestess, who baptized him."

[27] Among Egyptian symbols, we met with several specimens of the Cross. One, according to Justus Lipsius, signified "life to come." (See his treatise De Cruce, (Lutetiæ Parisiorum, 1598,) lib. 3, cap. 8.) We find another in Champollion's catalogue, which he interprets, "support our saviour." (Précis, tom. II., Tableau Gén., Nos. 277, 348.) Some curious examples of the reverence paid to this sign by the ancients have been collected by McCulloh, (Researches, p. 330, et seq.,) and by Humboldt, in his late work, Géographie du Nouveau Continent, tom. II. p. 354, et seq.

[28] "Ante, Deos homini quod conciliare valeret *Far* erat,"

says Ovid. (Fastorum, lib. 1, v. 337.) Count Carli has pointed out a similar use of consecrated bread, and wine or water, in the Greek and Egyptian mysteries. (Letters Américc., tom. I. let. 27.) See, also, McCulloh, Researches, p. 240, et seq.

never shone.[29] In their amazement, they not only magnified what they saw, but were perpetually cheated by the illusions of their own heated imaginations. In this they were admirably assisted by their Mexican converts, proud to establish—and half believing it themselves—a correspondence between their own faith, and that of their conquerors.[30]

The ingenuity of the chronicler was taxed to find out analogies between the Aztec and Scripture histories, both old and new. The migration from Aztlan to Anahuac was typical of the Jewish exodus.[31] The places, where the Mexicans halted on the march, were identified with those in the journey of the Israelites;[32] and the name of Mexico itself was found to be nearly identical with the Hebrew name for the Messiah.[33] The Mexican hieroglyphics afforded a boundless field for the display of this critical acuteness. The most remarkable passages in the Old and New Testaments were read in their mysterious characters; and the eye of faith could trace there the whole story of the Passion, the Saviour suspended from the cross, and the Virgin Mary with her attendant angels![34]

[29] Water for purification and other religious rites is frequently noticed by the classical writers. Thus Euripides;

"Ἁγνοῖς καθαρμοῖς πρῶτά νιν νίψαι θέλω
Θάλασσα κλύζει πάντα τἀνθρώπων κακά"

IPHIG. IN TAUR., vv. 1192, 1194.

The notes on this place, in the admirable Variorum edition of Glasgow, 1821, contain references to several passages of similar import in different authors.

[30] The difficulty of obtaining any thing like a faithful report from the natives is the subject of complaint from more than one writer, and explains the great care taken by Sahagun, to compare their narratives with each other. See Hist. de Nueva España, Prólogo.—Ixtlilxochitl, Hist. Chich., MS., Prôl.—Boturini, Idea, p. 116.

[31] The parallel was so closely pressed by Torquemada, that he was compelled to suppress the chapter containing it, on the publication of his book. See the Proemio to the edition of 1723, sec. 2.

[32] "The Devil," says Herrera, "chose to imitate, in every thing, the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, and their subsequent wanderings." (Hist. General, dec. 3, lib. 3, cap. 10.) But all that has been done by monkish annalist and missionary, to establish the parallel with the children of Israel, falls far short of Lord Kingsborough's learned labors, spread over nearly two hundred folio pages. (See Antiq. of Mexico, tom. VI. pp. 282–410.) *Quantum inane!*

[33] The Hebrew word from which is derived *Christ*, "the anointed," is still more nearly—not "precisely," as Lord Kingsborough states (Antiq. of Mexico, vol. VI. p. 186)—identical with that of Mexi, or Mesi, the chief who was said to have led the Aztecs on the plains of Anahuac.

[34] Interp. of Cod. Tel.-Rem., et Vat., Antiq. of Mexico, vol. VI.—Sahagun, Hist. de Nueva España, lib. 3, Suplem.—Veytia, Hist. Antig., lib. 1. cap. 16.

The Jewish and Christian schemes were strangely mingled together, and the brains of the good fathers were still further bewildered by the mixture of heathenish abominations, which were so closely intertwined with the most orthodox observances. In their perplexity, they looked on the whole as the delusion of the Devil, who counterfeited the rites of Christianity and the traditions of the chosen people, that he might allure his wretched victims to their own destruction.[85]

But, although it is not necessary to resort to this startling supposition, nor even to call up an apostle from the dead, or any later missionary, to explain the coincidences with Christianity; yet these coincidences must be allowed to furnish an argument in favor of some primitive communication with that great brotherhood of nations on the old continent, among whom similar ideas have been so widely diffused. The probability of such a communication, especially with Eastern Asia, is much strengthened by the resemblance of sacerdotal institutions, and of some religious rites, as those of marriage,[86] and the burial of the dead,[87] by the practice of human sacrifices, and even of cannibalism, traces of which are discernible in the Mongol races;[88] and, lastly, by a conformity of social usages and manners, so striking that the description of Montezuma's court may well pass for that of the Grand Khan's, as depicted by Maundeville and Marco Polo.[89] It would occupy too much room to go into details in this matter, without which, however, the strength of the argument cannot be felt, nor fully established. It has

[85] This opinion finds favor with the best Spanish and Mexican writers, from the Conquest downwards. Solís sees nothing improbable in the fact, that the malignant influence, so frequently noticed in sacred history, should be found equally in profane." Hist. de la Conquista, lib. 2, cap. 4.

[86] The bridal ceremony of the Hindoos, in particular, contains curious points of analogy with the Mexicans. (See Asiatic Researches, vol. VII. mem. 9.) The institution of a numerous priesthood, with the practices of confession and penance, was familiar to the Tartar people. (Maundeville, Voiage, chap. 23.) And monastic establishments were found in Thibet and Japan, from the earliest ages. Humboldt, Vues des Cordillères, p. 179.

[87] "Doubtless," says the ingenious Carli, "the fashion of burning the corpse, collecting the ashes in a vase, burying them under pyramidal mounds, with the immolation of wives and servants at the funeral, all remind one of the customs of Egypt and Hindostan." Lettres Américaines, tom II. let. 10.

[88] Marco Polo notices a civilized people in South-eastern China, and another in Japan, who drank the blood and ate the flesh of their captives; esteeming it the most savory food in the world,—"lapiù saporita et migliore, che si possa truovar al mondo." (Viaggi, lib. 2, cap. 75; lib. 3, 13, 14.) The Mongols, according to Sir John Maundeville, regarded the ears "sowced in vynegre," as a particular dainty. Voiage, chap. 23.

[89] Marco Polo, Viaggi, lib. 2, cap. 10.—Maundeville, Voiage, cap. 20, et alibi.

been done by others; and an occasional coincidence has been adverted to in the preceding chapters.

It is true, we should be very slow to infer identity, or even correspondence, between nations, from a partial resemblance of habits and institutions. Where this relates to manners, and is founded on caprice, it is not more conclusive than when it flows from the spontaneous suggestions of nature, common to all. The resemblance, in the one case, may be referred to accident; in the other, to the constitution of man. But there are certain arbitrary peculiarities, which, when found in different nations, reasonably suggest the idea of some previous communication between them. Who can doubt the existence of an affinity, or, at least, intercourse, between tribes, who had the same strange habit of burying the dead in a sitting posture, as was practised, to some extent, by most, if not all, of the Aborigines, from Canada to Patagonia?[40] The habit of burning the dead, familiar to both Mongols and Aztecs, is, in itself, but slender proof of a common origin. The body must be disposed of in some way; and this, perhaps, is as natural as any other. But when to this is added the circumstance of collecting the ashes in a vase, and depositing the single article of a precious stone along with them, the coincidence is remarkable.[41] Such minute coincidences are not unfrequent; while the accumulation of those of a more general character, though individually of little account, greatly strengthens the probability of a communication with the East.

A proof of a higher kind is found in the analogies of *science*. We have seen the peculiar chronological system of the Aztecs; their method of distributing the years into cycles, and of reckon-

See, also, a striking parallel between the Eastern Asiatics and Americans, in the Supplement to Ranking's "Historical Researches"; a work embodying many curious details of Oriental history and manners, in support of a whimsical theory.

[40] Morton, Crania Americana, (Philadelphia, 1839,) pp. 224–246.

The industrious author establishes this singular fact, by examples drawn from a great number of nations in North and South America.

[41] Gomara, Crónica de la Nueva España, cap. 202, ap. Barcia, tom. II.—Clavigero, Stor. del Messico, tom. I. pp. 94, 95.—McCulloh, (Researches, p. 198,) who cites the Asiatic Researches.

Dr. McCulloh, in his single volume, has probably brought together a larger mass of materials for the illustration of the aboriginal history of the continent, than any other writer in the language. In the selection of his facts, he has shown much sagacity, as well as industry; and, if the formal and somewhat repulsive character of the style has been unfavorable to a popular interest, the work must always have an interest for those who are engaged in the study of the Indian antiquities. His fanciful speculations on the subject of Mexican mythology may amuse those whom they fail to convince.

ing by means of periodical series, instead of numbers. A similar process was used by the various Asiatic nations of the Mongol family, from India to Japan. Their cycles, indeed, consisted of sixty, instead of fifty-two years; and for the terms of their periodical series, they employed the names of the elements, and the signs of the zodiac, of which latter the Mexicans, probably, had no knowledge. But the principle was precisely the same.[42]

A correspondence quite as extraordinary is found between the hieroglyphics used by the Aztecs for the signs of the days, and those zodiacal signs which the Eastern Asiatics employed as one of the terms of their series. The symbols in the Mongolian calendar are borrowed from animals. Four of the twelve are the same as the Aztec. Three others are as nearly the same as the different species of animals in the two hemispheres would allow. The remaining five refer to no creature then found in Anahuac.[43] The resemblance went as far as it could.[44] The similarity of these conventional symbols, among the several nations of the East, can hardly fail to carry conviction of a common origin for the system, as regards them. Why should not a similar conclusion

[42] Ante, Vol. I. p. 111, et seq.

[43] This will be better shown by enumerating the zodiacal signs, used as the *names of the years* by the Eastern Asiatics. Among the Mongols, these were, 1. mouse, 2. ox, 3. leopard, 4. hare, 5. crocodile, 6. serpent, 7. horse, 8. sheep, 9. monkey, 10. hen, 11. dog, 12. hog. The Mantchou Tartars, Japanese, and Thibetians, have nearly the same terms, substituting, however, for No. 3, tiger; 5, dragon; 8, goat. In the Mexican signs, for the names of the days, we also meet with *hare*, *serpent*, *monkey*, *dog*. Instead of the "leopard," "crocodile," and "hen,"—neither of which animals were known in Mexico, at the time of the Conquest,—we find the *ocelotl* the *lizard*, and the *eagle*.

The lunar calendar of the Hindoos exhibits a correspondence equally extraordinary. Seven of the terms agree with those of the Aztecs, namely, *serpent*, *cane*, *razor*, *path of the sun dog's tail*, *house*. Humboldt, Vues des Cordillères, p. 152.) These terms, it will be observed, are still more arbitrarily selected, not being confined to animals; as, indeed, the hieroglyphics of the Aztec calendar were derived indifferently from them, and other objects, like the signs of our zodiac.

These scientific analogies are set in the strongest light by M. de Humboldt, and occupy a large, and, to the philosophical inquirer, the most interesting, portion of his great work. (Vues des Cordillères, pp. 125-194.) He has not embraced in his tables, however, the Mongol calendar, which affords even a closer approximation to the Mexican, than that of the other Tartar races. Comp. Ranking, Researches, pp. 370, 371, note.

[44] There is some inaccuracy in Humboldt's definition of the *ocelotl*, as "the tiger," "the jaguar." Ibid., p. 159.) It is smaller than the jaguar, though quite as ferocious, and is as graceful and beautiful as the leopard, which it more nearly resembles. It is a native of New Spain, where the tiger is not known. See Buffon, Histoire Naturelle, (Paris, An. 8,) tom. II., *vox*, *Ocelotl*. The adoption of this latter name, therefore, in the Aztec calendar, leads to an inference somewhat exaggerated.

be applied to the Aztec calendar, which, although relating to days, instead of years, was, like the Asiatic, equally appropriated to chronological uses, and to those of divination ?[45]

I shall pass over the further resemblance to the Persians, showing in the adjustment of time by a similar system of intercalation ;[46] and to the Egyptians, in the celebration of the remarkable festival of the winter solstice ;[47] since, although sufficiently curious, the coincidences might be accidental, and add little to the weight of evidence offered by an agreement in combinations, of so complex and artificial a character, as those before stated.

Amidst these intellectual analogies, one would expect to meet with that of *language*, the vehicle of intellectual communication, which usually exhibits traces of its origin, even when the science and literature, that are embodied in it, have widely diverged. No inquiry, however, has led to less satisfactory results. The languages spread over the western continent far exceed in number those found in an equal population in the eastern.[48] They exhibit the remarkable anomaly of differing as widely in etymology as they agree in organization ; and, on the other hand, while they bear some slight affinity to the languages of the Old World in the former particular, they have no resemblance to them whatever in the latter.[49] The Mexican was spoken for an extent of three hundred leagues. But within the boundaries of New Spain more than twenty languages were found ; not simply

[45] Both the Tartars and the Aztecs indicated the year by its sign; as the "year of the hare," or rabbit," &c. The Asiatic signs, likewise, far from being limited to the years and months, presided, also, over days, and even hours. (Humboldt, Vues des Cordillères, p. 165.) The Mexicans had also astrological symbols appropriated to the hours. Gama, Descripcion, Parte 2, p. 117.

[46] Ante, Vol. I., p. 112, note.

[47] Achilles Tatius notices a custom of the Egyptians,—who, as the sun descended towards Capricorn, put on mourning; but, as the days lengthened, their fears subsided, they robed themselves in white, and, crowned with flowers, gave themselves up to jubilee, like the Aztecs.—This account, transcribed by Carli's French translator, and by M. de Humboldt, is more fully criticised by M. Jomard in the Vues des Cordillères, p. 309, et seq.

[48] Jefferson, (Notes on Virginia, (London, 1787,) p. 164,) confirmed by Humboldt (Essai Politique, tom. I. p. 353). Mr. Gallatin comes to a different conclusion. (Transactions of American Antiquarian Society, (Cambridge, 1836,) vol. II. p. 161.) The great number of American dialects and languages is well explained by the unsocial nature of a hunter's life, requiring the country to be parcelled out into small and separate territories for the means of subsistence.

[49] Philologists have, indeed, detected two curious exceptions, in the Congo and primitive Basque; from which, however, the Indian languages differ in many essential points. See Du Ponceau's Report, ap. Transactions of the Lit. and Hist. Committee of the Am. Phil. Society, vol. I.

dialects, but, in many instances, radically different.[50] All these idioms, however, with one exception, conformed to that peculiar synthetic structure, by which every Indian dialect appears to have been fashioned, from the land of the Esquimaux to Terra del Fuego ;[51] a system, which, bringing the greatest number of ideas within the smallest possible compass, condenses whole sentences into a single word,[52] displaying a curious mechanism, in which some discern the hand of the philosopher, and others only the spontaneous efforts of the savage.[53]

The etymological affinities detected with the ancient continent are not very numerous, and they are drawn indiscriminately from all the tribes scattered over America. On the whole, more analogies have been found with the idioms of Asia, than of any other quarter. But their amount is too inconsiderable to balance the opposite conclusion inferred by a total dissimilarity of structure.[54] A remarkable exception is found in the Othomi or Otomie language, which covers a wider territory than any other but the Mexican, in New Spain ;[55] and which, both in its

[50] Vater, (Mithridates, theil III, abtheil 3, p. 70,) who fixes on the Rio Gila and the Isthmus of Darien, as the boundaries, within which traces of the Mexican language were to be discerned. Clavigero estimates the number of dialects at thirty-five. I have used the more guarded statement of M. de Humboldt, who adds, that fourteen of these languages have been digested into dictionaries and grammars. Essai Politique, tom. I. p. 352.

[51] No one has done so much towards establishing this important fact, as that estimable scholar, Mr. Du Ponceau. And the frankness, with which he has admitted the exception that disturbed his favorite hypothesis, shows that he is far more wedded to science than to system. See an interesting account of it, in his prize essay before the Institute. Mémoire sur le Système Grammatical des Langues de quelques Nations Indiennes de l'Amérique. (Paris, 1838.)

[52] The Mexican language, in particular, is most flexible; admitting of combinations so easily, that the most simple ideas are often buried under a load of accessories. The forms of expression, though picturesque, were thus made exceedingly cumbrous. A "priest," for example, was called, *notlazomahuizteopixcatatzin*, meaning, "venerable minister of God, that I love as my father." A still more comprehensive word is *amatlacuilolitquitcatlaxtlahuitli*, signifying, "the reward given to a messenger who bears a hieroglyphical map conveying intelligence."

[53] See, in particular, for the latter view of the subject, the arguments of Mr. Gallatin, in his acute and masterly disquisition on the Indian tribes; a disquisition, that throws more light on the intricate topics of which it treats, than whole volumes that have preceded it. Transactions of the American Antiquarian Society, vol. II., Introd., sec. 6.

[54] This comparative anatomy of the languages of the two hemispheres, begun by Barton, (Origin of the tribes and Nations of America, (Philadelphia, 1797,) has been extended by Vater (Mithridates, theil III, abtheil 1, p. 348, et seq.). A selection of the most striking analogies may be found, also, in Malte Brun, book 75, table.

[55] *Othomi*, from *otho*, "stationary," and *mi*, "nothing." (Najera, Dissert., *ut infra.*) The etymology intimates the condition of this rude nation of war-

monosyllabic composition, so different from those around it, and in its vocabulary, shows a very singular affinity to the Chinese.[56] The existence of this insulated idiom, in the heart of this vast continent, offers a curious theme for speculation, entirely beyond the province of history.

The American languages, so numerous and widely diversified, present an immense field of inquiry, which, notwithstanding the labors of several distinguished philologists, remains yet to be explored. It is only after a wide comparison of examples, that conclusions founded on analogy can be trusted. The difficulty of making such comparisons increases with time, from the facility which the peculiar structure of the Indian languages affords for new combinations; while the insensible influence of contact with civilized man, in producing these, must lead to a still further distrust of our conclusions.

The theory of an Asiatic origin for Aztec civilization derives stronger confirmation from the light of *tradition*, which, shining steadily from the far North-west, pierces through the dark shadows that history and mythology have alike thrown around the antiquities of the country. Traditions of a Western, or North-western origin were found among the more barbarous tribes,[57] and by the Mexicans were preserved both orally and in their hieroglyphical maps, where the different stages of their migration are carefully noted. But who, at this day, shall read them?[58] They

riors, who, imperfectly reduced by the Aztec arms, roamed over the high lands north of the Valley of Mexico.

[56] See Najera's Dissertatio *De Lingua Othomitorum*, ap. Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, vol. V. New Series.

The author, a learned Mexican, has given a most satisfactory analysis of this remarkable language, which stands alone among the idioms of the New World, as the Basque—the solitary wreck, perhaps, of a primitive age—exists among those of the Old.

[57] Barton, p. 92.—Heckewelder, chap. 1, ap. Transactions of the Hist. and Lit. Committee of the Am. Phil. Soc., vol. I.

The various traditions have been assembled by M. Warden, in the Antiquités Mexicaines, part. 2, p. 185, et seq.

[58] The recent work of Mr. Delafield (Inquiry into the Origin of the Antiquities of America, (Cincinnati, 1839.)) has an engraving of one of these maps, said to have been obtained by Mr. Bullock, from Boturini's collection. Two such are specified on page 10 of that antiquary's Catalogue. This map has all the appearance of a genuine Aztec painting, of the rudest character. We may recognize, indeed, the symbols of some dates and places, with others denoting the aspect of the country, whether fertile or barren, a state of war or peace, &c. But it is altogether too vague, and we know too little of the allusions, to gather any knowledge from it of the course of the Aztec migration.

Gemelli Carreri's celebrated chart contains the names of many places on the route, interpreted, perhaps, by Siguenza himself, to whom it belonged; (Giro de Mondo, tom. VI. p. 56;) and Clavigero has endeavored to ascertain the various localities with some percision. (Stor. del Messico, tom. I. p. 160,

are admitted to agree, however, in representing the populous North as the prolific hive of the American races.[59] In this quarter were placed their Aztlan, and their Huehuetapallan; the bright abodes of their ancestors, whose warlike exploits rivalled those which the Teutonic nations have recorded of Odin and the mythic heroes of Scandinavia. From this quarter the Toltecs, the Chichemecs, and the kindred races of the Nahuatlacs, came successively up the great plateau of the Andes, spreading over its hills and valleys, down to the Gulf of Mexico.[60]

Antiquaries have industriously sought to detect some still surviving traces of these migrations. In the north-western districts of New Spain, at a thousand miles' distance from the capital, dialects have been discovered, showing intimate affinity with the Mexican.[61] Along the Rio Gila, remains of populous towns are to be seen, quite worthy of the Aztecs in their style of architecture.[62] The country north of the great Rio Colorado has been imperfectly explored; but in the higher latitudes, in the neigh-

et seq.) But, as they are all within the boundaries of New Spain, and, indeed, south of the Rio Gila, they throw little light, of course, on the vexed question of the primitive abodes of the Aztecs.

[59] This may be fairly gathered from the agreement of the *traditionary* interpretations of the maps of the various people of Anahuac, according to Veytia; who, however, admits, that it is "next to impossible," with the lights of the present day, to determine the precise route taken by the Mexicans. (Hist. Antig., tom. I. cap. 2.) Lorenzana is not so modest. "Los Mexicanos por tradicion viniéron por el Norte," says he, "y se saben ciertamente sus mansiones." (Hist. de Nueva España, p. 81, nota.) There are some antiquaries who see best in the dark.

[60] Ixtlilxochitl, Hist. Chich., MS., cap. 2, et seq.—Idem, Relaciones, MS.—Veytia, Hist. Antig., ubi supra.—Torquemada, Monarch. Ind., tom. I. lib. 1.

[61] In the province of Sonora, especially along the Californian Gulf. The Cora language, above all, of which a regular grammar has been published, and which is spoken in New Biscay, about 30° north, so much resembles the Mexican, that Vater refers them both to a common stock. Mithridates, theil III, abtheil 3, p. 143.

[62] On the southern bank of this river are ruins of large dimensions, described by the missionary Pedro Font, on his visit there, in 1775. (Antiq. of Mexico, vol. VI, p. 538).—At a place of the same name, Casas Grandes, about 33° north, and, like the former, a supposed station of the Aztecs, still more extensive remains are to be found; large enough, indeed, according to a late traveller, Lieut. Hardy, for a population of 20,000 or 30,000 souls. The country for leagues is covered with these remains, as well as with ustensils of earthen ware, obsidian, and other relics. A drawing, which the author has given of a painted jar or vase, may remind one of the Etruscan. "There were, also, good specimens of earthen images in the Egyptian style," he observes, "which are to *me*, *at least*, *so perfectly uninteresting*, that I was at no pains to procure any of them." (Travels in the Interior of Mexico, (London, 1829,) pp. 464–466.) The Lieutenant was neither a Boturini nor a Belzoni.

borhood of Nootka, tribes still exist, whose dialects, both in the termination and general sound of the words, bear considerable resemblance to the Mexican.[63] Such are the vestiges, few, indeed, and feeble, that still exist to attest the truth of traditions, which themselves have remained steady and consistent, through the lapse of centuries, and the migrations of successive races.

The conclusions suggested by the intellectual and moral analogies with Eastern Asia derive considerable support from those of a *physical nature.* The aborigines of the Western World were distinguished by certain peculiarities of organization, which have led physiologists to regard them as a separate race. These peculiarities are shown in their reddish complexion, approaching a cinnamon color; their straight, black, and exceedingly glossy hair; their beard thin, and usually eradicated;[64] their high cheek-bones, eyes obliquely directed towards the temples, prominent noses, and narrow foreheads falling backwards with a greater inclination than those of any other race except the African.[65] From this general standard, however, there are deviations, in the same manner, if not to the same extent, as in other quarters of the globe, though these deviations do not seem to be influenced by the same laws of local position.[66] Anatomists, also, have discerned in crania disinterred from the mounds, and in those of the inhabitants of the high plains of the Cordilleras, an obvious difference from those of the more barbarous tribes. This is seen especially in the ampler forehead, intimating a decided intellectual superiority.[67] These characteristics are found

[63] Vater has examined the languages of three of these nations, between 50° and 60° north, and collated their vocabularies with the Mexican, showing the probability of a common origin of many of the words in each. Mithridates, theil III, abtheil 3, p. 212.

[64] The Mexicans are noticed by M. de Humboldt, as distinguished from the other Aborigines, whom he had seen, by the quantity both of beard and mustaches. (Essai Politique, tom. I. p. 361.) The modern Mexican, however, broken in spirit and fortunes, bears as little resemblance, probably, in physical, as in moral characteristics, to his ancestors, the fierce and independent Aztecs.

[65] Prichard, Physical History, vol. I., pp. 167-169, 182, et seq.—Morton, Crania Americana, p. 66.—McCulloh, Researches, p. 18.—Lawrence, Lectures, pp. 317, 565.

[66] Thus we find, amidst the generally prevalent copper of cinnamon tint, nearly all gradations of color, from the European white, to a black, almost African; while the complexion capriciously varies among different tribes, in the neighborhood of each other. See examples in Humboldt, (Essai Politique, tom. I. pp. 358,359,) also Prichard, (Physical History, vol. II. pp. 452, 522, et alibi,) a writer, whose various research and dispassionate judgment have made his work a text-book in this department of science.

[67] Such is the conclusion of Dr. Warren, whose excellent collection has afforded him ample means for study and comparison. (See his Remarks be

to bear a close resemblance to those of the Mongolian family, and especially to the people of Eastern Tartary ;[68] so that, notwithstanding certain differences recognized by physiologists, the skulls of the two races could not be readily distinguished from one another by a common observer. No inference can be surely drawn, however, without a wide range of comparison. That hitherto made has been chiefly founded on specimens from the barbarious tribes.[69] Perhaps a closer comparison with the more civilized may supply still stronger evidence of affinity.[70]

In seeking for analogies with the Old World, we should not pass by in silence the *architectural remains* of the country, which, indeed, from their resemblance to the pyramidal structures of the East, have suggested to more than one antiquary the idea of a common origin.[71] The Spanish invaders, it is true, assailed

fore the British Association for the Advancement of Science, ap. London, Athenæum, Oct., 1837.) In the specimens collected by Dr. Morton, however, the barbarous tribes would seem to have a somewhat larger facial angle, and a greater quantity of brain, than the semi-civilized. Crania Americana, p. 259.

[68] "On ne peut se refuser d'admettre que l'espèce humaine n'offre pas de races plus voisines que le sont celles des Américains, des Mongols, des Mantchoux, et des Malais." Humboldt, Essai Politique, tom. I. p. 367.—Also, Prichard, Physical History, vol. I. pp. 184-186; vol. II. pp. 365-367.—Lawrence, Lectures, p. 365.

[69] Dr. Morton's splendid work on American crania has gone far to supply the requisite information. Out of about one hundred and fifty specimens of skulls, of which he has ascertained the dimensions with admirable precision, one third belong to the semi-civilized races; and of them thirteen are Mexican. The number of these last is too small to found any general conclusions upon, considering the great diversity found in individuals of the same nation, not to say kindred.—Blumenbach's observations on American skulls were chiefly made, according to Prichard, (Physical History, vol. I. pp. 183, 184,) from specimens of the Carib tribes, as unfavorable, perhaps, as any on the continent.

[70] Yet these specimens are not so easy to be obtained. With uncommon advantages, for procuring these myself in Mexico, I have not succeeded in obtaining any specimens of the genuine Aztec skull. The difficulty of this may be readily comprehended by any one who considers the length of time that has elapsed since the Conquest, and that the burial-places of the ancient Mexicans have continued to be used by their descendants. Dr. Morton more than once refers to his specimens, as those of the "genuine Toltec skull, from cemeteries in Mexico, older than the Conquest." (Crania Americana, pp. 152, 155, 231, et alibi.) But how does he know that the heads are Toltec? That nation is reported to have left the country about the middle of the eleventh century, nearly eight hundred years ago,—according to Ixtlilxochitl, indeed, a century earlier; and it seems much more probable, that the specimens now found in these burial-places should belong to some of the races who have since occupied the country, than to one so far removed. The presumption is manifestly too feeble to authorize any positive inference.

[71] The tower of Belus, with its retreating stories, described by Herodotus, (Clio, sec. 181,) has been selected as the model of the *tecoalli*; which leads Vater somewhat shrewdly to remark, that it is strange, no evidence of this should appear in the erection of similar structures by the Aztecs, in the whole

the Indian buildings, especially those of a religious character, with all the fury of fanaticism. The same spirit survived in the generations which succeeded. The war has never ceased against the monuments of the country; and the few that fanaticism has spared have been nearly all demolished to serve the purposes of utility. Of all the stately edifices, so much extolled by the Spaniards who first visited the country, there are scarcely more vestiges at the present day than are to be found in some of those regions of Europe and Asia, which once swarmed with populous cities, the great marts of luxury and commerce.[72] Yet some of these remains, like the temple of Xochicalco,[73] the palaces of

course of their journey to Anahuac. (Mithridates, theil III. abtheil 3, pp. 74, 75.) The learned Niebuhr finds the elements of the Mexican temple in the mythic tomb of Porsenna. (Roman History, Eng. trans., (London, 1827,) vol. I. p. 88.) The resemblance to the accumulated pyramids, composing this monument, is not very obvious. Comp. Pliny (Hist. Nat., lib. 36, sec. 19). Indeed, the antiquarian may be thought to encroach on the poet's province, when he finds in Etruscan *fable*,—"cúm omnia excedat fabulositas," as Pliny characterizes this,—the origin of Aztec science.

[72] See the powerful description of Lucan, Pharsalia, lib, 9, v. 966.

The Latin bard has been surpassed by the Italian, in the beautiful stanza, beginning *Giace l' alta Cartago*, (Gierusalemme Liberata, C. 15, s. 20,) which may be said to have been expanded by Lord Byron into a canto,—the fourth of Childe Harold.

[73] The most remarkable remains on the proper Mexican soil are the temple or fortress of Xochicalco, not many miles from the capital. It stands on a rocky eminence, nearly a league in circumference, cut into terraces faced with stone. The building on the summit is seventy-five feet long, and sixty-six broad. It is of hewn granite, put together without cement, but with great exactness. It was constructed in the usual pyramidal, terraced form, rising by a succession of stories, each smaller than that below it. The number of these is now uncertain; the lower one alone remaining entire. This is sufficient, however, to show the nice style of execution, from the sharp, salient cornices, and the hieroglyphical emblems with which it is covered, all cut in the hard stone. As the detached blocks found among the ruins are sculptured with bas-reliefs in like manner, it is probable that the whole building was covered with them. It seems probable also, as the same pattern extends over different stones, that the work was executed after the walls were raised.

In the hill beneath, subterraneous galleries, six feet wide and high, have been cut to the length of one hundred and eighty feet, where they terminate in two halls, the vaulted ceilings of which connect by a sort of tunnel with the buildings above. These subterraneous works are also lined with hewn stone. The size of the blocks, and the hard quality of the granite of which they consist, have made the buildings of Xochicalco a choice quarry for the proprietors of a neighboring sugar-refinery, who have appropriated the upper stories of the temple to this ignoble purpose! The Barberini at least built palaces, beautiful themselves, as works of art, with the plunder of the Coliseum.

See the full description of this remarkable building, both by Dupaix and Alzate. (Antiquités Mexicaines, tom. I. Exp. 1, pp. 15–20; tom. III, Exp. 1, Pl, 33.) A recent investigation has been made by order of the Mexican government, the report of which differs, in some of its details, from the preceding. Revista Mexicana, tom. I. mem. 5.

Tezcotzinco,[74] the colossal calendar-stone in the capital, are of sufficient magnitude, and wrought with sufficient skill, to attest mechanical powers in the Aztecs not unworthy to be compared with those of the ancient Egyptians.

But, if the remains on the Mexican soil are so scanty, they multiply as we descend the south-eastern slope of the Cordilleras, traverse the rich Valley of Oaxaca, and penetrate the forests of Chiapa and Yucatan. In the midst of these lonely regions, we meet with the ruins, recently discovered, of several ancient cities, Mitla, Palenque, and Itzalana or Uxmal,[75] which argue a higher civilization than anything yet found on the American continent; and, although it was not the Mexicans who built these cities, yet as they are probably the work of cognate races, the present inquiry would be incomplete without some attempt to ascertain what light they can throw on the origin of the Indian, and consequently of the Aztec civilization.[76]

Few works of art have been found in the neighborhood of any of the ruins. Some of them, consisting of earthen or marble vases, fragments of statues, and the like, are fantastic, and even hideous; others show much grace and beauty of design, and are apparently well executed.[77] It may seem extraordinary, that no iron in the buildings themselves, nor iron tools, should have been discovered, considering that the materials used are chiefly granite, very hard, and carefully hewn and polished. Red copper chisels and axes have been picked up in the midst of large blocks of granite imperfectly cut, with fragments of pillars and architraves, in the quarries near Mitla.[78] Tools

[74] Ante, Vol. I. p. 182–185.

[75] It is impossible to look at Waldeck's finished drawings of buildings, where Time seems scarcely to have set his mark on the nicely chiselled stone, and the clear tints are hardly defaced by a weather-stain, without regarding the artist's work as a *restoration;* a picture, true, it may be, of those buildings in the day of their glory, but not of their decay.—Cogolludo, who saw them in the middle of the seventeenth century, speaks of them with admiration, as works of "accomplished architects," of whom history has preserved no tradition. Historia de Yucatan, (Madrid, 1688,) lib. 4, cap. 2.

[76] In the original text is a description of some of these ruins, especially of those of Mitla and Palenque. It would have had novelty at the time in which it was written, since the only accounts of these buildings were in the colossal publications of Lord Kingsborough, and in the Antiquités Mexicaines, not very accessible to most readers. But it is unnecessary to repeat descriptions, now familiar to every one, and so much better executed than they can be by me, in the spirited pages of Stephens.

[77] See, in particular, two terracotta busts with helmets, found in Oaxaca, which might well pass for Greek, both in the style of the heads, and the casques that cover them. Antiquités Mexicaines, tom. III. Exp. 2, Pl. 36.

[78] Dupaix speaks of these tools, as made of pure copper. But doubtless there was some alloy mixed with it, as was practised by the Aztecs and

of a similar kind have been discovered, also, in the quarries near Thebes; and the difficulty, nay, impossibility, of cutting such masses from the living rock, with any tools which we possess, except iron, has confirmed an ingenious writer in the supposition, that this metal must have been employed by the Egyptians, but that its tendency to decomposition, especially in a nitrous soil, has prevented any specimens of it from being preserved.[79] Yet iron has been found, after the lapse of some thousands of years, in the remains of antiquity; and it is certain, that the Mexicans, down to the time of the Conquest, used only copper instruments, with an alloy of tin, and a siliceous powder, to cut the hardest stones, and some of them of enormous dimensions.[80] This fact, with the additional circumstance, that only similar tools have been found in Central America, strengthens the conclusion, that iron was neither known there, nor in ancient Egypt.

But what are the nations of the Old Continent, whose style of architecture bears most resemblance to that of the remarkable monuments of Chiapa and Yucatan? The points of resemblance will, probably, be found neither numerous nor decisive. There is, indeed, some analogy both to the Egyptian and Asiatic style of architecture in the pyramidal, terrace-formed bases on which the buildings repose, resembling, also, the Toltec and Mexican *teocalli*. A similar care, also, is observed in the people of both hemispheres, to adjust the position of their buildings by the cardinal points. The walls in both are covered with figures and hieroglyphics, which, on the American, as on the Egyptian, may be designed, perhaps, to record the laws and historical annals of the nation. These figures, as well as the buildings themselves, are found to have been stained with various dyes, principally vermillion;[81] a favorite color with the Egyptians, also, who painted their colossal statues and temples of granite.[82] Notwithstanding these points of similarity, the Palenque architecture has little to remind us of the Egyptian, or of the Oriental. It is, indeed, more conformable, in the perpendicular ele-

Egyptians; otherwise, their edges must have been easily turned by the hard substances on which they were employed.

[79] Wilkinson, Ancient Egyptians, vol. III. pp. 246 – 254.

[80] Ante, Vol. I. p. 139.

[81] Waldeck, Atlas Pittoresque, p. 73.

The fortress of Xochicalco was also colored with a red paint; (Antiquités Mexicaines, tom. I. p. 20;) and a cement of the same color covered the Toltec pyramid at Teotihuacan, according to Mr. Bullock, Six Months in Mexico, vol. II. p. 143.

[82] Description de l'Égypte, Antiq., tom. II. cap. 9, sec. 4.

The huge image of the Sphinx was originally colored red. (Clarke's Travels, vol. V. p. 202.) Indeed, many of the edifices, as well as statues, of ancient Greece, also, still exhibit traces of having been painted.

vation of the walls, the moderate size of the stones, and the general arrangement of the parts, to the European. It must be admitted, however, to have a character of originality peculiar to itself.

More positive proofs of communication with the East might be looked for in their sculpture, and in the conventional forms of their hieroglyphics. But the sculptures on the Palenque buildings are in relief, unlike the Egyptian, which are usually in *intaglio*. The Egyptians were not very successful in their representations of the human figure, which are on the same invariable model, always in profile, from the greater facility of execution this presents over the front view; the full eye is placed on the side of the head, while the countenance is similar in all, and perfectly destitute of expression.[83] The Palenque artists were equally awkward in representing the various attitudes of the body, which they delineated also in profile. But the parts are executed with much correctness, and sometimes gracefully; the costume is rich and various; and the ornamented head-dress, typical, perhaps, like the Aztec, of the name and condition of the party, conforms in its magnificence to the Oriental taste. The countenance is various, and often expressive. The contour of the head is, indeed, most extraordinary, describing almost a semi-circle from the forehead to the tip of the nose, and contracted towards the crown, whether from the artificial pressure practised by many of the Aborigines, or from some preposterous notion of ideal beauty.[84] But, while superior in the execution of the details, the Palenque artist was far inferior to the Egyptian in the number and variety of the objects displayed by him, which, on the Theban temples, comprehend animals as well as men, and almost every conceivable object of use, or elegant art.

The hieroglyphics are too few on the American buildings to authorize any decisive inference. On comparing them, how-

[83] The various causes of the stationary condition of art in Egypt, for so many ages, are clearly exposed by the duke di Serradifalco, in his *Antichità della Sicilia;* (Palermo, 1834, tom. II. pp. 33, 34;) a work in which the author, while illustrating the antiquities of a little island, has thrown a flood of light on the arts and literary culture of ancient Greece.

[84] "The ideal is not always the beautiful," as Winckelmann truly says, referring to the Egyptian figures. (Histoire de l'Art chez les Anciens, liv. 4, chap. 2, trad. Fr.) It is not impossible, however, that the portraits mentioned in the text may be copies from life. Some of the rude tribes of America distorted their infants' heads into forms quite as fantastic, and Garcilaso de la Vega speaks of a nation discovered by the Spaniards in Florida, with a formation apparently not unlike the Palenque. "*Tienen cabezas increiblemente largas, y ahusadas para arriba,* que las ponen así con artificio, atándoselas desde el punto, que nascen las criaturas, hasta que son de nueve ó diez años." La Florida, (Madrid, 1723,) p. 190.

ever, with those of the Dresden codex, probably from this same quarter of the country,[85] with those on the monument of Xochicalco, and with the ruder picture-writing of the Aztecs, it is not easy to discern anything which indicates a common system. Still less obvious is the resemblance to the Egyptian characters, whose refined and delicate abbreviations approach almost to the simplicity of an alphabet. Yet the Palenque writing shows an advanced stage of the art; and, though somewhat clumsy, intimates, by the conventional and arbitrary forms of the hieroglyphics, that it was symbolical, and perhaps phonetic, in its character.[86] That its mysterious import will ever be deciphered is scarcely to be expected. The language of the race who employed it, the race itself, is unknown. And it is not likely that another Rosetta stone will be found, with its trilingual inscription, to supply the means of comparison, and to guide the American Champollion in the path of discovery.

It is impossible to contemplate these mysterious monuments of a lost civilization, without a strong feeling of curiosity as to who were their architects, and what is their probable age. The data, on which to rest our conjectures of their age, are not very substantial; although some find in them a warrant for an antiquity of thousands of years, coeval with the architecture of Egypt and Hindostan.[87] But the interpretation of hieroglyphics, and the apparent duration of trees, are vague and unsatisfactory.[88] And how far can we derive an argument from the discol-

[85] For a notice of this remarkable codex, see Ante, Vol. I. p. 104. There is, indeed, a resemblance, in the use of straight lines and dots, between the Palenque writing and the Dresden MS. Possibly these dots denoted years, like the rounds in the Mexican system.

[86] The hieroglyphics are arranged in perpendicular lines. The heads are uniformly turned towards the right, as in the Dresden MS.

[87] "Les ruines," says the enthusiastic chevalier Le Noir, "sans nom, à qui l'on a donné celui de *Palenque*, peuvent remonter comme les plus anciennes ruines du monde à trois mille ans. Ceci n'est point mon opinion seule; c'est celle de *tous* les voyageurs qui ont vu les ruines dont il s'agit, de *tous* les archéologues qui en ont examiné les dessins ou lu les descriptions, enfin des historiens qui ont fait des recherches, et qui n'ont rien trouvé dans les annales du monde qui fasse soupçonner l'époque de la fondation de tels monuments, dont l'origine se perd dans la nuit des temps." (Antiquités Mexicaines, tom. II., Examen, p. 73.) Colonel Galindo, fired with the contemplation of the American ruins, pronounces this country the true cradle of civilization, whence it passed over to China, and latterly to Europe, which, whatever "its foolish vanity" may pretend, has but just started in the march of improvement! See his Letter on Copan, ap. Trans. of Am. Ant. Soc., vol. II.

[88] From these sources of information, and especially from the number of the concentric rings in some old trees, and the incrustation of stalactites found on the ruins of Palenque, Mr. Waldeck computes their age at between two and three thousand years. Voyage en Yucatan, p. 78.) The criterion, as

oration and dilapidated condition of the ruins, when we find so many structures of the Middle Ages dark and mouldering with decay, while the marbles of the Acropolis, and the gray stone of Pæstum, still shine in their primitive splendor?

There are, however, undoubted proofs of considerable age to be found there. Trees have shot up in the midst of the buildings. which measure, it is said, more than nine feet in diameter.[89] A still more striking fact is the accumulation of vegetable mould in one of the courts, to the depth of nine feet above the pavement.[90] This in our latitude would be decisive of a very great antiquity. But, in the rich soil of Yucatan, and under the ardent sun of the tropics, vegetation bursts forth with irrepressible exuberance, and generations of plants succeed each other without intermission, leaving an accumulation of deposits, that would have perished under a northern winter. Another evidence of their age is afforded by the circumstance, that, in one of the courts of Uxmal, the granite pavement, on which the figures of tortoises were raised in relief, is worn nearly smooth by the feet of the crowds who have passed over it;[91] a curious fact, suggesting inferences both in regard to the age and population of the place. Lastly, we have authority for carrying back the date of many of these ruins to a certain period, since they were found in a deserted, and probably dilapidated, state by the first Spaniards who entered the country. Their notices, indeed, are brief and casual, for the old Conquerors had little respect for works of art;[92] and it is fortunate for these structures, that they had

far as the trees are concerned, cannot be relied on in an advanced stage of their growth; and as to the stalactite formations, they are obviously affected by too many casual circumstances, to afford the basis of an accurate calculation.

[89] Waldeck, Voyage en Yucatan, ubi supra.

[90] Antiquités Mexicaines, Examen, p. 76.

Hardly deep enough, however, to justify Captain Dupaix's surmise of the antediluvian existence of these buildings; especially, considering that the accumulation was in the sheltered position of an interior court.

[91] Waldeck, Voyage en Yucatan, p. 97.

[92] The chaplain of Grijalva speaks with admiration of the "lofty towers of stone and lime, some of them very ancient," found in Yucatan. (Itinerario, MS. (1518).) Bernal Diaz, with similar expressions of wonder, refers the curious antique relics found there to the Jews. (Hist. de la Conquista, cap. 2, 6.) Alvarado, in a letter to Cortés, expatiates on the "maravillosos et grandes edificios," to be seen in Guatemala. Oviedo, Hist. de las Ind., MS., lib. 33, cap. 42.) According to Cogolludo, the Spaniards, who could get no tradition of their origin, referred them to the Phœnicians or Carthaginians. (Hist. de Yucatan, lib. 4, cap. 2.) He cites the following emphatic notice of these remains from Las Casas: "Ciertamente la tierra de Yucathan da á entender cosas muy especiales, y de mayor antiguedad, por las grandes, admirables, y excessivas maneras de edificios, y letreros de ciertos caracteras, que en otra ninguna parte se hallan." Loc. cit.) Even the

ceased to be the living temples of the gods, since no merit of architecture, probably, would have availed to save them from the general doom of the monuments of Mexico.

If we find it so difficult to settle the age of these buildings, what can we hope to know of their architects? Little can be gleamed from the rude people by whom they are surrounded. The old Tezcucan chronicler, so often quoted by me, the best authority for the traditions of his country, reports, that the Toltecs, on the breaking up of their empire,—which he places, earlier than most authorities, in the middle of the tenth century,—migrating from Anahuac, spread themselves over Guatemala, Tecuantepec, Campeachy, and the coasts and neighboring isles on both sides of the Isthmus.[93] This assertion, important, considering its source, is confirmed by the fact, that several of the nations in that quarter adopted systems of astronomy and chronology, as well as sacerdotal institutions, very similar to the Aztec,[94] which, as we have seen, were also probably derived from the Toltecs, their more polished predecessors in the land.

If so recent a date for the construction of the American buildings be thought incompatible with this oblivion of their origin, it should be remembered how treacherous a thing is tradition, and how easily the links of the chain are severed. The builders of the pyramids had been forgotten before the time of the earliest Greek historians.[95] The antiquary still disputes, whether the

inquisitive Martyr has collected no particulars respecting them, merely noticing the buildings of this region with general expressions of admiration. (De Insulis nuper Inventis, pp. 334–340.) What is quite as surprising is the silence of Cortés, who traversed the country forming the base of Yucatan, in his famous expedition to Honduras, of which he has given many details we would gladly have exchanged for a word respecting those interesting memorials. Carta Quinta de Cortés, MS.

I must add, that some remarks in the above paragraph in the text would have been omitted, had I enjoyed the benefit of Mr. Stephens' researches, when it was originally written. This is especially the case with the reflections on the probable condition of these structures at the time of the Conquest; when some of them would appear to have been still used for their original purposes.

[93] "Asimismo los Tultecas que escapáron se fuéron por las costas del Mar del Sur y Norte, como son Huatimala, Tecuantepec, Cuauhzacualco, Campechy, Tecolotlan, y los de las Islas y Costas de una mar y otra, que despues se viniéron á multiplicar." Ixtlilxochitl. Relaciones, MS., No. 5.

[94] Herrera. Hist. General, dec. 4, lib. 10, cap. 1-4.—Cogolludo, Hist. de Yucatan, lib. 4. cap. 5.—Pet. Martyr, De Insulis, ubi supra.

M. Waldeck comes to just the opposite inference, namely, that the inhabitants of Yucatan were the true sources of the Toltec and Aztec civilization. (Voyage en Yucatan, p. 72." "Doubt must be our lot in everything," exclaims the honest captain Dupaix,—"*the true faith always excepted.*" Antiquités Mexicaines, tom. I. p. 21.

[95] "Inter omnes eos non constat a quibus factæ sint, justissimo casu, obliteratis tantæ vanitatis auctoribus." Pliny, Hist. Nat., lib. 36, cap. 17.

frightful inclination of that architectural miracle, the tower of Pisa, standing, as it does, in the heart of a populous city, was the work of accident or design. And we have seen how soon the Tezcucans, dwelling amidst the ruins of their royal palaces, built just before the Conquest, had forgotten their history, while the more inquisitive traveller refers their construction to some remote period before the Aztecs.[96]

The reader has now seen the principal points of coincidence insisted on between the civilization of ancient Mexico, and the eastern hemisphere. In presenting them to him, I have endeavored to confine myself to such as rest on sure historic grounds; and not so much to offer my own opinion, as to enable him to form one for himself. There are some material embarrassments in the way to this, however, which must not be passed over in silence. These consist, not in explaining the fact, that, while the mythic system and the science of the Aztecs afford some striking points of analogy with the Asiatic, they should differ in so many more; for the same phenomenon is found among the nations of the Old World, who seem to have borrowed from one another those ideas, only, best suited to their peculiar genius and institutions. Nor does the difficulty lie in accounting for the great dissimilarity of the American languages to those in the other hemisphere; for the difference with these is not greater than what exists among themselves; and no one will contend for a separate origin for each of the Aboriginal tribes.[97] But it is scarcely possible to reconcile the knowledge of Oriental science with the total ignorance of some of the most serviceable and familiar arts, as the use of milk, and iron, for example; arts so simple, yet so important to domestic comfort, that when once acquired, they could hardly be lost.

The Aztecs had no useful domesticated animals. And we have seen that they employed bronze, as a substitute for iron, for all mechanical purposes. The bison, or wild cow of America, however, which ranges in countless herds over the magnificent prairies of the west, yields milk like the tame animal of the same spieces, in Asia and Europe;[98] and iron was scattered in large masses

[96] Ante, Vol. I. p. 185.

[97] At least, this is true of the etymology of these languages, and, as such, was adduced by Mr. Edward Everett, in his Lectures on the Aboriginal civilization of America, forming part of a course delivered some years since by that acute and highly accomplished scholar.

[98] The mixed breed, from the buffalo and the European stock, was known formerly in the north-western counties of Virginia, says Mr. Gallatin: (Synopsis, sec. 5;) who is, however, mistaken in asserting, that "the bison is not known to have ever been domesticated by the Indians." (Ubi supra.) Gomara speaks of a nation, dwelling about 40° north latitude, on the north-

over the surface of the table-land. Yet there have been people considerably civilized in Eastern Asia, who were almost equally strangers to the use of milk.[99] The Buffalo range was not so much on the western coast, as on the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains;[100] and the migratory Aztec might well doubt, whether the wild, uncouth monsters, whom he occasionally saw bounding with such fury over the distant plains, were capable of domestication, like the meek animals which he had left grazing in the green pastures of Asia. Iron, too, though met with on the surface of the ground, was more tenacious, and harder to work, than copper, which he also found in much greater quantities on his route. It is possible, moreover, that his migration may have been previous to the time when iron was used by his nation; for we have seen more than one people in the Old World employing bronze and copper, with entire ignorance, apparently, of any more serviceable metal.[101]—Such is the explanation, unsatisfactory, indeed, but the best that suggests itself, of this curious anomaly.

western borders of New Spain, whose chief wealth was in droves of these cattle, (*buyes con una giba sobre la cruz*, "oxen with a hump on the shoulders,") from which they got their clothing, food, and drink, which last, however, appears to have been only the blood of the animal.—Historia de las Indias, cap. 214, ap. Barcia, tom. II.

[99] The people of parts of China, for example, and, above all, of Cochin China, who never milk their cows, according to Macartney, cited by Humboldt, Essai Politique, tom. III. p. 58, note.—See, also, p. 118.

[100] The native regions of the buffalo were the vast prairies of the Missouri, and they wandered over the long reach of country east of the Rocky Mountains, from 55° north, to the head-waters of the streams between the Mississippi and the Rio del Norte. The Columbia plains, says Gallatin, were as naked of game as of trees. (Synopsis, sec. 5.) That the bison was sometimes found, also, on the other side of the mountains, is plain from Gomara's statement. (Hist. de las Ind., loc. cit.) See, also, Laet, who traces their southern wanderings to the river Vaquimi, (?) in the province of Cinaloa, on the Californian Gulf. Novus Orbis, (Lug. Bat. 1633,) p. 286.

[101] Ante, Vol. I. p. 139.

Thus, Lucretius,

> "Et prior æris erat, quam ferri cognitus usus,
> Quo facilis magis est natura, et copia maior.
> Ære solum terræ tractabant, æreque belli
> Miscebant fluctus."
>
> De Rerum Natura, lib. 5.

According to Carli, the Chinese were acquainted with iron 3,000 years before Christ. (Lettres Américs., tom, II. p. 63.) Sir J. G. Wilkinson, in an elaborate inquiry into its first appearance among the people of Europe and Western Asia, finds no traces of it earlier than the sixteenth century before the Christian era. (Ancient Egyptians, vol. III. pp. 241 – 246.) The origin of the most useful arts is lost in darkness. Their very utility is one cause of this, from the rapidity with which they are diffused among distant nations. Another cause is that, in the first ages of the discovery, men are more occupied with availing themselves of it than with recording its history; until time turns history into fiction. Instances are familiar to every school-boy.

The consideration of these and similar difficulties has led some writers to regard the antique American civilization as purely indigenous. Whichever way we turn, the subject is full of embarrassment. It is easy, indeed, by fastening the attention on one portion of it, to come to a conclusion. In this way, while some feel little hesitation in pronouncing the American civilization original ; others, no less certainly, discern in it a Hebrew, or an Egyptian, or a Chinese,or a Tartar origin, as their eyes are attracted by the light of analogy too exclusively to this or the other quarter. The number of contradictory lights, of itself, perplexes the judgment, and prevents us from arriving at a precise and positive inference. Indeed, the affectation of this, in so doubtful a matter, argues a most unphilosophical mind. Yet, where there is most doubt, there is often the most dogmatism.

The reader of the preceding pages may, perhaps, acquiesce in the general conclusions,—not startling by their novelty,—

First, that the coincidences are sufficiently strong to authorize a belief, that the civilization of Anahuac was, in some degree, influenced by that of Eastern Asia.

And, secondly, that the discrepancies are such as to carry back the communication to a very remote period ; so remote, that this foreign influence has been too feeble to interfere materially with the growth of what may be regarded, in its essential features, as a peculiar and indigenous civilization.

MARKET IN AGUAS CALIENTES

Mexico, vol. two.

APPENDIX.

PART II.

ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS.

APPENDIX, PART II.

ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS.

No. I.—See Vol. I., p. 121.

ADVICE OF AN AZTEC MOTHER TO HER DAUGHTER; TRANSLATED FROM SAHAGUN'S "HISTORIA DE NUEVA ESPANA," LIB. VI., CAP. XIX.

[I have thought it best to have this translation made in the most literal manner, that the reader may have a correct idea of the strange mixture of simplicity, approaching to childishness, and moral sublimity, which exist together in the original. It is the product of the twilight of civilization.]

My beloved daughter, very dear little dove, you have already heard and attended to the words which your father has told you. They are precious words, and such as are rarely spoken or listened to, and which have proceeded from the bowels and heart, in which they were treasured up; and your beloved father well knows that you are his daughter, begotten of him, are his blood, and his flesh; and God our Lord knows that it is so. Although you are a woman, and are *the image of your father*, what more can I say to you than has already been said? What more can you hear than what you have heard from your lord and father? who has fully told you what it is becoming for you to do and to avoid, nor is there anything remaining, which concerns you, that he has not touched upon. Nevertheless, that I may do towards you my whole duty, I will say to you some few words.—The first thing that I earnestly charge upon you is, that you observe and do not forget what your father has now told you, since it is all very precious; and persons of his condition rarely publish such things; for they are the words which belong to the noble and wise,—valuable as rich jewels. See, then, that you take them and lay them up in your heart, and write them in your bowels. If God gives you life, with these same words will you teach your sons and daughters, if God shall give you them.—The second thing that I desire to say to you is, that I love you much, that you are my dear daughter. Remember that nine months I bore you in my womb, that you were born and brought up in my arms. I placed you in your cradle, and in my lap, and with my milk I nursed you. This I tell you, in order that you may know that I and your father are the

source of your being; it is we who now instruct you. See that you receive our words, and treasure them in your breast.—Take care that your garments are such as are decent and proper; and observe that you do not adorn yourself with much finery, since this is a mark of vanity and of folly. As little becoming is it, that your dress shall be very mean, dirty, or ragged; since rags are a mark of the low, and of those who are held in contempt. Let your clothes be becoming and neat, that you may neither appear fantastic nor mean. When you speak, do not hurry your words from uneasiness, but speak deliberately and calmly. Do not raise your voice very high, nor speak very low, but in a moderate tone. Neither mince, when you speak, nor when you salute, nor speak through your nose; but let your words be proper, of a good sound, and your voice gentle. Do not be nice in the choice of your words. In walking, my daughter, see that you behave becomingly, neither going with haste, nor too slowly; since it is an evidence of being puffed up, to walk too slowly, and walking hastily causes a vicious habit of restlessness and instability. Therefore neither walk very fast, nor very slow; yet when it shall be necessary to go with haste, do so,—in this use your discretion. And when you may be obliged to jump over a pool of water, do it with decency, that you may neither appear clumsy nor light. When you are in the street, do not carry your head much inclined, or your body bent; nor as little go with your head very much raised; since it is a mark of ill breeding; walk erect, and with your head slightly inclined. Do not have your mouth covered, or your face, from shame, nor go looking like a near-sighted person, nor, on your way, make fantastic movements with your feet. Walk through the street quietly, and with propriety. Another thing that you must attend to, my daughter, is, that, when you are in the street, you do not go looking hither and thither, nor turning your head to look at this and that; walk neither looking at the skies, nor on the ground. Do not look upon those whom you meet with the eyes of an offended person, nor have the appearance of being uneasy; but of one who looks upon all with a serene countenance; doing this, you will give no one occasion of being offended with you. Show a becoming countenance; that you may neither appear morose, nor, on the other hand, too complaisant. See, my daughter, that you give yourself no concern about the words you may hear, in going through the street, nor pay any regard to them, let those who come and go say what they will. Take care that you neither answer nor speak, but act as if you neither heard nor understood them; since doing in this manner, no one will be able to say with truth that you have said anything amiss. See, likewise, my daughter, that you never paint your face, or stain it or your lips with colors, in order to appear well; since this is a mark of vile and unchaste women. Paints and coloring are things which bad women use,—the immodest, who have lost all shame and even sense, who are like fools and drunkards, and are called *rameras* (prostitutes). But, that your husband may not dislike you, adorn yourself, wash yourself, and cleanse your clothes; and let this be done with moderation; since, if every day you wash yourself and your clothes, it will be said of you that you are overnice,—too delicate; they will call you *tapepetzon tinemaxoch*.—My daughter, this is the course you are to take; since in this manner the ancestors from whom you spring brought us up. Those noble and venerable dames, your grandmothers, told us not so many things as I have told you,—they said but few words, and spoke thus: "Listen, my daughters; in this world, it is necessary to live with much prudence and circumspection. Hear this allegory, which I shall now tell you, and preserve it, and take from it a warning and example for living aright. Here, in this world, we travel by a very narrow, steep, and dangerous road, which is as a lofty mountain ridge, on whose top passes a narrow path; on either side is a great gulf without bottom, and, if you deviate from the path, you will fall into it. There is need therefore, of much dis-

eretion in pursuing the road." My tenderly loved daughter, my little dove, keep this illustration in your heart, and see that you do not forget it,—it will be to you as a lamp and a beacon, so long you shall live in this world.—Only one thing remains to be said, and I have done. If God shall give you life, if you shall continue some years upon the earth, see that you guard yourself carefully, that no stain come upon you; should you forfeit your chastity, and afterwards be asked in marriage and should marry any one, you will never be fortunate, nor have true love,—he will always remember that you were not a virgin, and this will be the cause of great affliction and distress: you will never be at peace, for your husband will always be suspicious of you. O, my dearly beloved daughter, if you shall live upon the earth, see that not more than one man approaches you; and observe what I now shall tell you, as a strict command. When it shall please God that you receive a husband, and you are placed under his authority, be free from arrogance, see that you do not neglect him, nor allow your heart to be in opposition to him. Be not disrespectful to him. Beware, that, in no time or place, you commit the treason against him, called adultery. See that you give no favor to another; since this, my dear and much loved daughter, is to fall into a pit without bottom, from which there will be no escape. According to the custom of the world, if it shall be known, for this crime they will kill you, they will throw you into the street, for an example to all the people, where your head will be crushed and dragged upon the ground. Of these says a proverb: "You will be stoned and dragged upon the earth, and others will take warning at your death." From this will arise a stain and dishonor upon our ancestors, the nobles and senators from whom we are descended. You will tarnish their illustrious fame, and their glory, by the filthiness and impurity of your sin. You will, likewise, lose your reputation, your nobility, and honor of birth; your name will be forgotten and abhorred. Of you will it be said; that you were buried in the dust of your sins. And remember, my daughter, that, though no man shall see you, nor your husband ever know what happens, *God, who is in every place, sees you,* will be angry with you, and will also excite the indignation of the people against you, and will be avenged upon you as he shall see fit. By his command, you shall either be maimed, or struck blind, or your body will wither, or you will come to extreme poverty, for daring to injure your husband. Or, perhaps, he will give you to death, and put you under his feet, sending you to the place of torment. Our Lord is compassionate; but, if you commit treason against your husband, God, who is in every place, shall take vengeance on your sin, and will permit you to have neither contentment, nor repose, nor a peaceful life; and he will excite your husband to be always unkind towards you, and always to speak to you with anger. My dear daughter, whom I tenderly love, see that you live in the world in peace, tranquillity, and contentment, all the days that you shall live. See that you disgrace not yourself, that you stain not your honor, nor pollute the lustre and fame of your ancestors. See that you honor me and your father, and reflect glory on us by your good life. May God prosper you, my first-born, and may you come to God, who is in every place.

No. II.—See Vol. I., p. 134.

A CASTILIAN AND AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF A POEM ON THE MUTABILITY OF LIFE BY NEZAHUALCOYOTL, LORD OF TEZCUCO.

[This poem was fortunately rescued from the fate of too many of the Indian MSS., by the chevalier Boturini, and formed part of his valuable *Muséo*. It was subsequently incorporated in the extensive collection of documents made by father Manuel de la Vega, in Mexico, 1792. This magnificent collection was made in obedience to an enlightened order of the Spanish government, "that all such MSS. as could be found in New Spain, fitted to illustrate the antiquities, geography, civil, ecclesiastical, and natural history of America, should be copied and transmitted to Madrid." This order was obeyed, and the result was a collection of thirty-two volumes in folio, which, amidst much that is trivial and of little worth, contains also a mass of original materials, of inestimable value to the historian of Mexico and of the various races who occupied the country of New Spain.]

Un rato cantar quiero,
pues la ocasion y el tiempo se ofrece;
ser admitido espero,
si intento lo merece;
y comienzo mi canto,
aunque fuera mejor llamarle llanto.
Y tú, querido Amigo,
goza la amenidad de aquestas flores,
alégrate conmigo;
desechemos de pena los temores,
que el gusto trae medida,
por ser al fin con fin la mala vida.
Io tocaré cantando
el músico instrumento sonoroso,
tú de flores gozando
danza, y festeja á Dios que es Poderoso;
gocemos de esta gloria,
porque la humana vida es transitoria.
De Ocblehacan pusíste
en esta noble Corte, y siendo tuyo,
tus sillas, y quisiste
vestirlas; donde arguyo,

que con grandeza tanta
el Imperio se aumenta y se levanta.
Oyoyotzin prudente,
famoso Rey y singular Monarca,
goza del bien presente,
que lo presente lo florido abarca;
porque vendrá algun dia
que busques este gusto y alegría.
Entonces tu Fortuna
te ha de quitar el Cetro de la mano,
ha de menguar tu Luna,
no te verás tan fuerte y tan ufano;
entonces tuas criados
de todo bien serán desemparados.
Y en tan triste suceso
los nobles descendientes de tu nido,
de Príncipes el peso,
los que de nobles Padres han nacido,
faltando tú Cabeza,
gustarán la amargura de pobreza.
Y traerán á la memoria
quien fuíste en pompa de todos envidiado
tus triunfos y victoria;
y con la gloria y Magestad passada
cotejando pesares,
de lágrimas harán crecidas Mares.
Y estos tus descendientes,
que te sirven de pluma y de corona,
de tí viéndose ausentes,
de Culhuacan estrañarán la cuna,
y tenidos por tales
con sus desdichas crécerán sus males.
Y de esta grandeza rara,
digna de mil coronas y blasones,
será la fama avara;
solo se acordarán en las naciones,
lo bien que governáron,
las tres Cabezas que el imperio honreron.
En México famosa
Moctezumá, valor de pecho Indiano;
á Culhuacan dichosa
de Neçahualcoyotl rigió la mano;
Acatlapan la fuerte
Totoquilhuastli le salió por suerte.
Y ningun olvido temo
de lo bien que tu reyno dispusíste,
estando en el supremo
lugar, que de la mano recibíste
de aquel Señor del Mundo,
factor de aquestas cosas sin segundo.
Y goza pues muy gustoso,
O Neçahualcoyotl, lo que agora tienes;
con flores de este hermoso
jardin corona tus ilustres sienes;
oye mi canto, y lira
que á darte gustos y placeres tira.

Y los gustos de esta vida,
sus riquezas, y mandos son prestados,
son sustancia fingida,
con apariencias solo matizados;
y es tan gran veadad esta,
que á una pregunta me has de dar respuesta.
¿ Y que es de Cihuapan,
y Quantzintecomtzin el valiente,
y Conahuatzin;
que es de toda esa gente ?
sus voces; ! agora acaso !
ya están en la otra vida, este es el caso.
¡ Ojala los, que agora
juntos los tiene del amor el hilo,
que amistad atesora,
vieramos de la muerte el duro filo!
porque no hay bien seguro,
que siempre trae mudanza á lo futuro.

Now would I sing, since time and place
Are mine,—and oh ! with thee
May this my song obtain the grace
My purpose claims for me.
I wake these notes on song intent,
But call it rather a lament.
Do thou, beloved, now delight
In these my flowers, pure and bright,
Rejoicing with thy friend;
Now let us banish pain and fear,
For, if our joys are measured here,
Life's sadness hath its end.

And I will strike, to aid my voice,
The deep, sonorous chord;
Thou, dancing, in these flowers rejoice,
And feast Earth's mighty Lord;
Seize we the glories of to-day,
For mortal life fleets fast away.—
In Ocblehacan, all thine own,
Thy hand hath placed the noble throne,
Which thou hast richly dressed;
From whence I argue, that thy sway
Shall be augmented day by day,
In rising greatness blessed.

Wise Oyovotzin ! prudent king !
Unrivalled Prince, and great !
Enjoy the fragrant flowers that spring
Around thy kingly state;
A day will come which shall destroy
Thy present bliss,—thy present joy,—
When fate the sceptre of command
Shall wrench from out thy royal hand,—
Thy moon diminished rise;
And, as thy pride and strength are quenched,

From thy adherents shall be wrenched
All that they love or prize.
When sorrows shall my truth attest,
And this thy throne decline,—
The birds of thy ancestral nest,
The princes of thy line,—
The mighty of thy race,—shall see
The bitter ills of poverty ;—
And then shall memory recall
They envied greatness, and on all
Thy brilliant triumphs dwell;
And as they think on by-gone years,
Compared with present shame, their tears
Shall to an ocean swell.

And those, who, though a royal band,
Serve thee for crown, or plume,
Remote from Culhuacan's land
Shall find the exile's doom
Deprived of thee,—their rank forgot,—
Misfortune shall o'erwhelm their lot.
Then fame shall grudgingly withhold
Her meed to greatness, which of old
Blazons and crowns displayed;
The people will retain alone
Remembrance of that *triple throne*
Which this our land obeyed.

Brave Moctezuma's Indian land
Was Mexico the great,
And Nezahualcoyotl's hand
Blessed Culhuacan's state,
Whilst Totoquil his portion drew
In Acatlapan, strong and true;
But no oblivion can I fear,
Of good by the accomplished here,
Whilst high upon thy throne ;
That station, which, to match thy worth
Was given by the Lord of Earth,
Maker of good alone !

Then, Nazahualcoyotl,—now,
In what thou *hast*, delight ;
And wreathe around thy royal brow
Life's garden blossoms bright ;
List to my lyre and my lay,
Which aim to please thee, and obey.
The pleasures, which our lives present,—
Earth's sceptres, and its wealth,—are lent,
Are shadows fleeting by ;
Appearance colors all our bliss ;
A truth so great, that now to this
One question, make reply.

What has become of Cihuapan,
Quantzintecomtzin brave,
And Conahuatzin, mighty man ;

Where are they? In the grave!
Their names remain, but they are fled,
Forever numbered with the dead.
Would that those now in friendship bound,
We whom Love's thread encircles round,
Death's cruel edge might see!
Since good on earth is insecure,
And all things must a change endure
In dark futurity!

NO. III.—See Vol. I., p. 140.

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESIDENCE OF NEZAHUALCOYOTL AT TEZCOTZINCO; EXTRACTED FROM IXTLILXOCHITL'S "HISTORIA CHICHIMECA," MS., CAP. XLII.

The most delightful of the gardens and the one containing the rarest curiosities was known as the Woods of Tezcotzinco. Surrounding it was a great wall, the summit of which also served as a promenade, and was reached by a staircase built partly of masonry and partly hewn in the solid rock. As the water, which supplied the fountains, drinking troughs, baths and pipes that irrigated the garden, was brought from distant mountains, an aqueduct of great magnificence was constructed of solid masonry, which finally emptied its contents into the principal reservoir at the summit of the gardens. In this reservoir was situated a rock, within the circumference of which, were engraved the years of King Nezahualcoiotzin from his birth; outside of this were recorded his most memorable achievements. Nearer the centre was a representation of his coat of arms, which was as follows: a house in flaming ruins, near which was a very noble edifice, between them a precious stone fastened to a stag's hoof, from which sprouted a tuft of beautiful feathers, and a doe upon which was seen an arm grasping a bow and arrows, and a man clad in armor. At the sides were two tigers spouting fire and water; surrounding these devices were twelve heads of nobles and kings. There were other emblems of a heraldic nature, but these were mistakenly destroyed by the first Archbishop of Mexico Don Juan de Zumarraga, under the delusion that they were idols. At this reservoir the water was divided, one stream flowing around the extreme northern boundary, the other surrounding the southern. On the loftiest site were erected buildings in the form of a tower, which were topped by little pyramids of hewn stone, one of these in the shape of a flower-pot held tufts and plumes of feathers which were symbolical of the name of the gardens. Somewhat lower down was a couchant lion of rock, more than twelve feet in length; his face was turned toward the east, and he was resplendent with wings and feathers. He lay under a gorgeous canopy of gold decorated with plumes, and from his open mouth looked out a face, the portrait of the king. Still lower down were three pools; upon the rock that formed the sides of the central one, were engraved the figures of three women, typical of the head of the empire and its tributaries. In the rock of the pool toward the north, was engraved the shield and coat of arms of the City of Tolan, the capital of the Tultecas, and in the rock of the pool to the south, were the armorial designs and name of the City Tenaiocan, capital of the

Empire of the Chichemecas. From this pool the water descended in a cascade, liberally sprinkling the fragant flowers, and falling with such force upon the rock beneath that it sounded like rain. Behind this garden were the baths, two of them hewn in one solid rock; the steps leading into them, also carved in the rock, were so highly polished that they seemed like mirrors. In the balustrade of these steps was engraved the precise date, even to the hour, of the death of Señor Huexotzinco, a favorite friend of the king, the news being received, when this work was in progress. Beyond the baths were the castle and palace which the King occupied while at the gardens. Here there were many bedrooms, private rooms and parlors, the most spacious of which opened upon a court where he received the Kings of Mexico, and Tlacopan and great nobles, when they went to visit him. In this court-yard games were played for the amusement and entertainment of the guests. These castles, composed of many different kinds of stone, were so beautiful and wonderfully made that they did not seem to be the work of human industry. The King's bed-chamber was round. As I have already said, the gardens were filled with all kinds of beautiful trees, fragrant flowers, birds, native and foreign, of many kinds, who made the air vocal with wonderful melody. In another inclosure were many deers, rabbits and hares. If every thing in this garden, as well as the other gardens of the kingdom, were described minutely, it would fill a large volume.

NO. IV.—See Vol. I., p. 152.

TRANSLATION FROM IXTLILXOCHITL'S "HISTORIA CHICHIMECA," MS., CAP. LXIV.

OF THE EXTRAORDINARY SEVERITY WITH WHICH THE KING NEZAHUALPILLI PUNISHED THE MEXICAN QUEEN FOR HER ADULTERY AND TREASON.

When Axaiacatzin, king of Mexico, and other lords, sent their daughters to king Nezahualpilli, for him to choose one to be his queen and lawful wife, whose son might succeed to the inheritance, she who had highest claims among them, from nobility of birth and rank, was Chachiuhnenetzin, daughter of the Mexican king. But, being at that time very young, she was brought up by the monarch in a separate palace, with great pomp and numerous attendants, as became the daughter of so great a king. The number of servants attached to her household exceeded two thousand. Young as she was, she was yet exceedingly artful and vicious; so that, finding herself alone, and seeing that her people feared her, on account of her rank and importance, she began to give way to the unlimited indulgence of her lust. Whenever she saw a young man who pleased her fancy, she gave secret orders to have him brought to her, and, having satisfied her desires, caused him to be put to death. She then ordered a statue or effigy of his person to be made, and, adorning it with rich clothing, gold, and jewelry, had it placed in the apartment in which she lived. The number of statues of those whom she thus put to death was so great as almost to fill the apartment. When the king came to visit her, and inquired respecting these statues, she answered, that they were her gods; and he, knowing how strict the Mexicans were in the worship

of their false deities, believed her. But, as no iniquity can be long committed with entire secrecy, she was finally found out in this manner. Three of the young men, for some reason or other, she had left alive. Their names were Chicuhcoatl, Huitzilimitzin, and Maxtla, one of whom was lord of Tesoyucan, and one of the grandees of the kingdom ; and the other two, nobles of high rank. It happened, that one day the king recognized on one of these a very precious jewel, which he had given to the queen; and, although he had no fear of treason on her part, it gave him some uneasiness. Proceeding to visit her that night, her attendants told him that she was asleep, supposing that the king would then return, as he had done at other times. But the affair of the jewel made him insist on entering the chamber in which she slept; and, going to awake her, he found a statue in the bed, adorned with her hair, and closely resembling her. This being seen by the king, and, also, that the attendants around were in much trepidation and alarm, he called his guards, and, assembling all the people of the house, made a general search for the queen, who was shortly found, at an entertainment with the three young lords, who were likewise arrested with her. The king referred the case to the judges, of his court, in order that they might make an inquiry into the matter, and examine the parties implicated. These discovered many individuals, servants of the queen, who had in some way or other been accessory to her crimes, workmen who had been engaged in making and adorning the statues, others who had aided in introducing the young men into the palace, and others again who had put them to death, and concealed their bodies. The case having been sufficiently investigated, he despatched ambassadors to the kings of Mexico and Tlacopan, giving them information of the event, and signifying the day on which the punishment of the queen and her accomplices was to take place; and he likewise sent through the empire to summon all the lords to bring their wives and their daughters, however young they might be, to be witnesses of a punishment which he designed for a great example. He also made a truce with all the enemies of the empire, in order that they might come freely to see it. The time being arrived, so great was the concourse of people gathered on the occasion, that, large as was the city of Tezcuco, they could scarcely all find room in it. The execution took place publicly, in sight of the whole city. The queen was put to the *garrote*, [a method of strangling by means of a rope twisted round a stick,] as well as her three gallants; and, from their being persons of high birth, their bodies were burned, together with the effigies before mentioned. The other parties who had been accessory to the crime, who were more than two thousand persons, were also put to the *garrote*, and buried in a pit made for the purpose in a ravine near a temple of the Idol of Adulterers. All applauded so severe and exemplary a punishment, except the Mexican lords, the relations of the queen, who were much incensed at so public an example, and, although for the present they concealed their resentment, meditated future revenge. It was not without cause that the king experienced this disgrace in his household, since he was thus punished for the unworthy means made use of by his father to obtain his mother as a wife.

NO. V.—See Vol I., p. 184.

INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN BY VELASQUEZ, GOVERNOR OF CUBA, TO CORTES, ON HIS TAKING COMMAND OF THE EXPEDITION ; DATED AT FERNANDINA, OCTOBER 23, 1518.

[The instrument forms part of the Muñoz collection.]

Whereas, I, Diego Velasquez, appointed by Their Highnesses, judge, captain-general and assessor of this Island of Fernandina, sent, sometime since, in the name and service of Their Highnesses, a well manned squadron, under the command of Juan de Grijalva, a citizen of Trinidad in this island, to see and sail around the recently discovered Island of Yucatan Santa Maria de los Remedios, and, please God our Lord, to make other discoveries, and in the name of Their Highnesses take possession thereof. One of these large sloops was sent back to me, because it leaked, and on board were the sick and those who had been wounded by the Indians of Santa Maria de los Remedios. He also sent a report of the expedition and discoveries made, one of them being an island known as Cozumel, to which he gave the name of Santa Cruz, another was a very large land, a part of which was called Ulua, but he renamed it, Santa Maria de los Nieves, from which place he sent me the said sloop and people, and wrote me that he was going to continue his investigations to determine if that land was an island or a continent. So long time having passed without hearing from him, it is presumed, though not known, that he must be in need of help, also because a sloop which I sent to the said Juan de Grijalva from this port, the city of Santiago, in order that it might join the fleet at the port of San Cristóbal de las Havana, and in that way be better provided with everything necessary in the service of Their Highnesses, reaching the place where it expected to find him, the said Juan de Grijalva had set sail, and had gone, with all of the said squadron, leaving behind him directions for the course of the said sloop in following him, and as the said sloop, in which there were eighty or ninety men, did not find said squadron, it took said directions and followed said Juan de Grijalva, and according to appearances and information given by the wounded and sick that the said Juan de Grijalva sent me, it had not met him, neither had he heard any news from it, nor had the said sick or wounded known anything of it on their return trip, although they had come a great part of the way along the coast of the Island of Santa Maria de los Remedios where it had gone, from which it is presumed that under stress of weather, they were obliged to stand in shore, or to land in some place, where the said eighty or ninety Spaniards are in danger, because of the ship, because they are so few in number, or because they are lost searching for the said Juan de Grijalva, although they went well provided with arms and ammunition. Besides this, after I sent the said Juan de Grijalva with the said squadron, I have been credibly informed by an Indian of the said Island of Yucatan, that certain of the principal chiefs have six Christian captives which they treat as slaves, making them work on their farms. These were taken a long time since from a sloop that put into port

lost, and it is believed that among them, is Captain Nicuesa, who, the Catholic King, Don Fernando of glorious memory, commanded to go to the continent. To redeem them would be a great service rendered to God our Lord and Their Highnesses. In consideration of which, and in the service of God our Lord and Their Highnesses, it seemed to me best to send in search of and to succor the said squadron that said Juan de Grijalva commanded, and in search of the sloop that sailed after he did and following him, and to rescue, if it be possible, the said Christians that in the hands of said Indians are captive, I resolved, after much thought, deliberation, and conversation with judicious persons, to send another squadron, well supplied, rigged and manned and furnished with everything necessary for such an expedition, in order that if they find the first fleet, or said sloop which followed it, they may be able to succor them, or besiege the place, or if they should not find them, they can alone sail around and explore those islands, learn their secrets, and do anything they can in the service and name of God our Lord and Their Highnesses. For Captain of this expedition, I have resolved to appoint you Hernando Cortés, believing from my knowledge of you since you have been in this island in my company and the service you have rendered to Their Highnesses, that you are a judicious person, and that with all diligence and zeal in their royal service, you will give a good account of all which is by me, in the name of Their Highnesses, commanded in said negotiation, and you will conduct and manage it in the way bestfitted to advance the interests of Their Highnesses and the cause of God our Lord. In order that the negotiations be well conducted, what you have to do, to look into, and with much vigilance and diligence inquire into and know, is the following :

1 Serve God in all things, punishing with severity those who are irreverent.

2 Punish especially fornication.

3 Prohibit dice and card playing, for they are occasions of discord and other excesses.

4 The squadron having sailed from this City of Santiago, you will be careful to charge them neither to insult nor injure Spaniards or Indians, in any port you may enter.

5 Having taken the necessary provisions in said ports, you will set sail for your destination, first reviewing your troops and arms.

6 Do not allow either an Indian or squaw to go with you.

7 Once at sea and boats taken in, you will in your own boat visit the other ships, and again review the troops, calling the roll of each ship.

8 You will advise the Captains and Masters of the other vessels never to leave your convoy or fleet, and also that they do all that is possible to arrive together at the Island of Cozumel, Santa Cruz, whither your direct course will be.

9 You will command them, if by chance any vessel arrive before you, that no one dare to treat the Indians badly, neither tell them the cause of their visit, nor question them about the Christians captive in the Island of Santa Maria de los Remedios, only say that the Captain will speak with them when he arrives.

10 Arriving at said Island of Santa Cruz, you will explore and sound its harbors, bays and inlets, also those of Santa Maria de los Remedios and Santa Maria de las Nieves and give a full report of them.

11 You will tell the Indians of Cozumel, Santa Cruz, and other places that it is by command of the King that you visit them. You will speak of his power and conquests, particularly of his conquests in these islands and continent ; of his favors to all who serve him; you will also tell them that they ought to give in their allegiance to him, and as a proof of it, present you, as others have done, gold, pearls, &c., and thus he will see their good intentions

and will protect and defend them ; that I, in his name, assure them of this, that I greatly regret the battle fought against them by Francisco Hernandez, and that I send you to explain to them that His Highness wishes them to be well treated.

12 You will obtain complete information about the crosses which it is said are found in the Island of Santa Cruz and worshipped by the Indians, as well as the origin and cause of such customs.

13 You will learn in a general way whatever concerns the religion of the land.

14 Take great care to instruct them in the true faith, as this is the principal reason why Their Highnesses permit these discoveries.

15 Inquire for the fleet of Juan de Grijalva and for the sloop commanded by Christóbal de Olid, that followed him.

16 In case you first meet the squadron, you may then look for the sloop, agreeing upon a place where all may again meet.

17 You will do the same, should you first find the sloop.

18 You will keep along the coast of the Island of Yucatan Santa Maria de los Remedios, where are the six Christians in the power of some chiefs, who are known by Melchor Indio of that place, who goes with you. Treat him with great kindness, in order that he may remain with you and serve you faithfully. May you be kept from harm, for the Indians of that land, in case of war, are very skilful.

19 Wherever you go, you will treat the Indians very kindly.

20 Whatever treasure you may receive, you will put in a box having three keys, one of which you will retain, the inspector shall have one, and a treasurer you may appoint, the other.

21 Whenever you need water, wood, &c., you will send judicious persons, under the command of the one in whom you have most confidence, so that they give no cause for scandal, nor endanger their lives.

22 If in the interior you should see a settlement of Indians, who shall offer friendship, you will go to them well armed and with the most pacific people, being very watchful that no harm be done them, either in their worldly goods or women.

23 In such case you will leave the ships well guarded. You will be very careful that no one deceive you, and that the Indians do not mingle much with the Spaniards.

24 If it please God our Lord that you may find the Christians that in said Island of Yucatan Santa Maria de los Remedios are captive, you will continue your voyage to the low point, which is the beginning of the continent that the said Juan de Grijalva recently discovered, and you will continue in search of him along the coast, taking note of all the rivers and ports of it, until you reach the bay of San Juan, and Santa Maria de las Nieves, which is the place from which the said J. de Grijalva sent me the sick and wounded and wrote me what had happened up to that time, and if you should there find him, you will unite your forces and go with Juan, because between the Spaniards that you carry and those who are with him there can be no differences.....Let each one have charge of the people he carries with him.... You will consult together as to what is best in accordance with these instructions and those that Grijalva took with him, and the trading will be done in the presence of Francisco de Peñalosa, inspector, that J. de Grijalva has with him.

25 You will carefully look into everything in the countries you visit, both moral and natural, and inquire if there are pearls, spices, gold, &c., particularly in Santa Maria de las Nieves, from which place Grijalva sent me certain specimens of gold, melted and not melted.

26 When you disembark let it be before your Lord, and many witnesses,

and you will take possession of the land with the accustomed solemnities. Inquiries about the kind of people, their character and condition, for it is said that there are people in those lands with large, broad ears, and others whose faces are like dogs; also inquire about the Amazons, who, the Indians you carry with you say, are in that vicinity.

27 The rest I leave to your prudence, being confident that you will in all things be extremely careful to do what shall most redound to the service of God and Their Highnesses.

28 In any port of this Island where you might find Spaniards that wish to go with you, do not take those who have debts unless they pay them, or give sufficient security for them.

29 Immediately after arriving at Santa Maria de las Nieves, you will send in the ship arriving soonest here, all that you will have exchanged and found, gold, pearls, spices, birds, &c., with relation of that you have done and what you think to do, that I may give notice of it to the King.

30 You will recognize, according to the right, the lawsuits, civil and criminal, that happen, as Captain of this army with all the powers, &c., &c. Done in this city of Santiago, port of this island of Fernandina, Oct. 23, 1518.

No. VI.—See Vol. I., p. 194.

EXTRACT FROM LAS CASAS, "HISTORIA GENERAL DE LAS INDIAS," MS., LIB. III., CAP. CXVI.

[Few Spanish scholars have had access to the writings of Las Casas; and I have made this short extract from the original, as a specimen of the rambling but vigorous style of a work, the celebrity of which has been much enhanced by the jealous reserve with which it has been withheld from publication.]

This is one of the errors and blunders that many have held and made in these parts, because, without having the Indians, or any other idolatrous nation, instructed for a long time, it is a monstrous mistake to take from them their idols. Idolaters never give up their idols voluntarily, because no one can leave, of his own choice and with pleasure, that which he has drawn in with his mother's milk, and that which on the authority of his elders for many years, he has held as God, without first having understood, that that which is given him in place of his god, is the true God. Consider what doctrine they could give them, in two, three, four, or in ten days that they were there, or even a longer time that they might be there, of the true God; neither could they know what to give them to uproot the erroneous opinions about their gods, that going away, as they must go, they would not return to idolatry. Before idols can be taken from their hearts, we must know the conception and estimation that the idolaters, by lasting, diligent, and continual teaching, have of their gods, and then paint upon their hearts the conception and truth of the true God, and afterwards they themselves, seeing their mistake and error, will throw down and destroy with their own hands and willingly the idols they venerated as God and gods. So teaches San Augustin in one of his sermons.

But this was not the last of the blunders made with these Indians in this matter of religion; they have made them erect crosses, inducing the Indians

to reverence them. If there were time for it, or hope of reaping any benefit from it, or they could be taught to understand it, but not having time, nor opportunity, nor language, it seems a superfluous and useless thing; because the Indians may think they are given an idol of that figure, which Christians have as God, so they will worship that stick as God, and be idolaters. The most certain and convenient rule and doctrine, that in these lands, and other pagan lands like them, Christians ought to give and hold when they go for a short time into a place, as these went, and also when they go to live among them, is to give them very good examples of virtuous and Christian works, in order that, as says our Redeemer, seeing them, they praise and give glory to the God and Father of the Christians, and by them judge that he who has such worshippers, cannot but be the good and true God.

No. VII.—See Vol. I., p. 230.

DEPOSITION OF ALONSO HERNANDEZ DE PUERTO CARRERO, MS.

[Puerto Carrero and Montejo were the two officers sent home by Cortés from Villa Rica with despatches to the government. The emissaries were examined under oath before the venerable Dr. Carbajal, one of the Council of the Indies, in regard to the proceedings of Velasquez and Cortés; and the following is the deposition of Puerto Carrero. He was a man of good family, superior in this respect to most of those embarked in the expedition. The original is in the Archives of Simancas.]

This declaration and deposition of Alonso Hernandez Puerto Carrero was taken by me, Joan de Samano in the City of Coruña. April, 30th, 1520. He being duly sworn testified to the following:

First, he said that he did not go in the squadron gotten up by Francisco Hernandez de Cordova and Caycedo, and his companion, of which squadron the said F. H. de Cordova was Captain-General and principal shipper; and that he has heard say that these men discovered the island which is called Yucatan.

Item. He said, that in the squadron of Capt.-Gen. J. de Grijalva, this witness did not go, but that he saw a Captain named Pedro de Alvarado, who was sent by Juan de Grijalva in a sloop with certain gold and jewels to Diego Velazquez, and he heard say that after Diego Velazquez saw that they brought so little gold and that Capt. Juan de Grijalva wished to return immediately and not trade any longer, he resolved to speak to Hernandez Cortes in order that he might form a squadron, for there was no person at present in Santiago better prepared for this, as he had three ships, and beside this, no one in the island was more generally beloved. He was asked how he knew the aforesaid and answered that he had heard it said by many persons in the island. He further says that it was publicly proclaimed in the town where this witness lived that all persons who would go with the squadron should receive a third part of the profits and the other two thirds were for those who fitted up the fleet and for the ships.

He was asked who made said proclamation, in whose name it was made, and who, was it then said, formed the fleet.

He answered that he had heard it said, that Hernando Cortes had written a letter to the mayor of the city, in orde that he should make the proclamation and that he heard say that Diego Velasquez spoke with Hernando Cortés in order that together they should form the said fleet, for at present there was no other person in the island so well prepared for it as he, as he had three ships, and was generally well beloved in the island, and that he had heard say, that if he would not go as Captain the third part of those who went with him would not have gone ; that he does not know the agreement they had between them, but he heard say that both contributed to the fleet, and that Hernando Cortés gave more than two thirds of it, and the other third, witness believes, was given by Diego Velasquez, because he heard it so stated, and after he went in said fleet, he saw certain ships furnished by Hernando Cortés, the expense of which he paid, that it seemed to him that Cortés furnished two thirds or more, and that of ten ships that went in the fleet, three were given by Diego Velasquez, and seven by Cortés and his friends.

He said that many persons, who went with the fleet, told him that Hernando Cortés caused it to be proclaimed, that all who wished to go in his company, should they need money to buy clothes, provisions or arms, should apply to him, and that he would help them, and would give them what might be necessary, and that to all who applied to him, he gave, and that he knows this, because many persons, whom he had helped with money, had so told him, and that being in the village of Trinidad, he saw that he and his friends, gave to all the people that were there, all that was necessary ; also being in the city of San Cristóbal de la Havana, he saw him do the same, and also saw him buy pigs and bread enough for three or four months.

He was asked who was thought to be the principal one in furnishing the fleet, and who was publicly acknowledged to be. He said, that what he heard say and saw, was, that Hernando Cortés furnished two thirds, and that the said Diego Velasquez and Hernando Cortés formed it as he has already said, and that he knows nothing more about it. He was asked if he knew that said Diego Velasquez would be the principal one, on account of being Governor, for Their Highnesses, of the lands and islands discovered by his industry ; he does not know, because Gonzalo de Guzman and Narvaez had not yet arrived.

He was asked if he knows if the said Diego Velasquez has the rank of Lieutenant-Governor and Captain-General of the Island of Cuba ; he said, he had heard say that he is Lieutenant-Admiral. He was asked if he knew of the treaty and agreement that said Diego Velasquez made with Jeronomite Friars, in the name of His Majesty, and of the instructions they gave him for the discoveries ; he said he had been told, that he had made a report to them of a land he had discovered which was very rich, and sent to ask permission of them to go there and trade, and the Jeronomite Fathers gave it ; and he knows this because he has heard it said. He was asked if he saw this treaty, or any powers of said Fathers or said instruction ; he said, it was very possible that he had seen them, but of their contents he remembered only what he had already stated.

He was asked if he saw or heard say that the said powers and stipulations of said Jeronomite Fathers, were given to Diego Velasquez or to the said Hernando Cortés ; he said that the powers that the Jeronomite Fathers sent to Diego Velasquez, would be for him, and not for Hernando Cortés, because the said Diego Velasquez sent to ask them.

He was asked how and for what reason he obeyed Hernando Cortés as Captain-General of the fleet ; he said because Diego Velasquez gave him power in the name of His Highness, to make this voyage and trade with the people, and that he knows it because he saw the power and heard them all say so.

He was asked why they did not use, with the said Hernando Cortés, the

powers that he had from said Diego Velasquez. He said that this fleet went with the excuse of looking for Juan de Grijalva ; that he heard it said that Diego Velasquez had not power from the Jeronomite Fathers to form this fleet, but under the pretext above stated they formed it, and that he used the power that Diego Velasquez gave him and traded with the people.

He was asked why, when they wished to found a town, they again appointed him Captain-General and Chief Justice and he replied that Hernando Cortes, after having traded for some time, and seeing that he had few provisions, scarcely enough to return to the Island of Cuba, said that he wished to return, and then all the people gathered together and persuaded him to found a town, saying that the Indians were kindly disposed toward them, and showed that they were pleased with them, and the land was well suited to them and that it would be rendering a great service to His Majesty. He answered that he did not bring authority to found a colony that he could be responsible for, but that as it would be a service rendered to His Majesty to colonize, he would allow them to do so, and they appointed Mayor and Aldermen and these met in a place set apart for the purpose, and appointed Chief Justice and Captain-General in the name of His Majesty.

He was asked what they did with the ships that they took out and he said that after they had founded the town, the masters of the ships came and said to the Captain that all the ships were going to founder, that they could not be kept afloat. The said Captain gave orders to certain masters and pilots that they should go on board the ships and should examine those which were sea-worthy and should see if they could repair them, and the said masters and pilots said that there were only three ships, which were sea-worthy, and worth repairing, and that it would cost a great amount of money ; that the others were not worth saving, and that some of them sank, being anchored and those that were not worth repairing, he let go, and that this is the truth, which he signed with his name.

He said that he remembered hearing that Hernando Cortés had spent, on this fleet, five thousand ducats—[$'8,75]—that Diego Velasquez had spent one thousand seven hundred ducats, more or less, but this was spent in wine, oil, vinegar and clothes, which an agent of Diego Velasquez, who was there, sold at great profit. He sold thirty-two pints of wine for four ducats, being at the rate of one hundred ducats a pipe, thirty-two pints of oil for six ducats, and the same with vinegar, shirts at two dollars each, sandals a ducat a pair, and a bunch of beads costing him twenty cents, for two ducats, and everything else at the same rate. This witness knows these things, because he saw them sold and he even sold a part of them himself.

ALONSO HERNANDEZ PUERTO CARRERO.

Sworn to before me,

JOAN DE SAMANO.

No. VIII.—See Vol. I., p. 232.

EXTRACT FROM THE "CARTA DE VERA CRUZ," MS.

[The following extract from this celebrated letter of the Municipality of La Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz to the Emperor, gives a succinct view of the foundation of the first colony in Mexico, and of the appointment of Cortés by that body as

Chief Justice and Captain-General. The original is preserved in the Imperial Library at Vienna.]

After said chief had taken leave of us, and returned to his home, we, who came in this fleet, persons of noble blood, hidalgos and gentlemen zealous in the service of Our Lord and your Royal Highnesses, desirous of aggrandizing your royal crown, of enlarging your dominions and of increasing your income, met and conversed with said Captain Fernando Cortés, saying that this land was good, that according to the specimens of gold that the chief had brought, it was believed that it must be very rich, and judging from the way in which said chief had received us, it was to be believed that he and his people were kindly disposed toward us; wherefore it seemed to us that it would not redound to the service of Your Majesties to do in this land what Diego Velazquez had commanded said Captain Fernando Cortés to do, which was, to secure all the gold he could by trading, and return with it to the island of Fernandina, the only ones to profit from it being the said Diego Velasquez and the said Captain. What seemed best to all of us, was that, in the name of Your Royal Highnesses, he should establish here a colony, in which justice should be done to all, in order that you should have authority here as you have in your kingdoms and dominions, for this land being peopled by Spaniards, beside increasing the territory and income of Your Majesties, they could render great services to us and to those who come after us. This being resolved upon, we met, all of one mind and will, and made a requisition of said Captain, in the which we said, that as he saw how much it would redound to the service of God Our Lord, and Your Majesties, that this land should be colonized, giving him the reasons that we have above stated to Your Majesties, we requested him that from the present time, he cease trading in the way which he came to do, because that would ruin the land to a great degree, which would be much against the interest of Your Majesties. In this way, with certain protestations against him, if he would not comply, we begged and requested that he presently appoint, in the name of Your Royal Highnesses, for the colony, that by us is to be founded, Governor and Aldermen. This request being made to the said Captain, he said that he would give his answer the following day. Said Captain seeing that what we asked would redound to the service of Your Royal Highnesses, answered us on the following day, saying that his greatest desire was to serve Your Majesties in the best way possible, and putting aside his own interests, which were, by continuing his trade with the Indians, to reimburse himself for the great expense of fitting out this squadron in connection with said Diego Velasquez; he was pleased and happy to do that which was asked by us, because it would so greatly redound to the service of Your Royal Highnesses. He presently commenced with great diligence to people and found a colony, which he named La Villa Rica de Vera Cruz (The Rich Village of the True Cross), and appointed us who subscribe to this document Governors and Aldermen of said Villa, and, in the name of Your Highnesses, administered the oath customary in such cases; after which, on the following day, we entered the room set apart for the purpose, and being there assembled, sent to call said Captain Fernando Cortés, and asked him, in the name of Your Royal Highnesses to show us the papers and instructions that the said Diego Velasquez had given him to come to these parts, which he immediately sent for and showed to us; after having seen, read and well examined said papers, we found, that according to instructions and powers there given, said Captain Fernando Cortés no longer had authority to act as captain; therefore it seemed to us, most excellent Princes, that, in order to secure peace and concord among ourselves, as well as good government, it was best to appoin

a person for Your Royal Service, who should answer in the name of Your Majesties in said colony and in these parts as magistrate, captain and head, whom all could respect, until we could communicate with Your Royal Highnesses, in order that you might direct what would be your pleasure in the matter, and seeing that to no person could we better give this charge than to said Fernando Cortés, for, besides being a person well fitted for this, he is very zealous in the service of Your Majesties, also has great experience in these parts and islands, and having spent all he possessed to come, as he came, with this squadron in the service of Your Majesties, and having renounced, as we have already related, all he might have gained, had he continued trading as he came expecting to do, we conferred upon him in the name of Your Royal Highnesses, the title of Magistrate and Mayor, from whom we received the oath required in such cases, and having done as was befitting Your Majesties' royal service, we received him in your royal name, in our sessions, as Chief Justice, and captain of your royal arms, in which capacity he will continue to act, until Your Majesties decree what will more redound to your service. We have wished to make a full statement of all this to Your Majesties in order that you may know what we have done here, and the state in which we are at present.

No. IX.—See Vol. I., p. 281.

EXTRACT FROM CAMARGO'S "HISTORIA DE TLASCALA," MS.

[This passage from the Indian chronicler relates to the ceremony of inauguration of a Tecuhtle, or merchant-knight, in Tlascala. One might fancy himself reading the pages of St. Palaye, or any other historian of European chivalry.]

The ceremony of making knights of the natives of Mexico, Tlaxacalla and other provinces, is a very familiar one, so we will not describe it in detail, only speak of it very briefly. It is known that any Lord or sons of Lords who personally have taken an active part in war, or who may have done or undertaken to do anything noble or advantageous to the country, if it showed indications of great courage, and if he were of good repute in the republic, was made a knight. If they were so rich that they were titled because of their wealth, they made knights of them, but with different ceremonies.

The merchant who was made a knight, and his descendants who were knights, were called Tecuhtles. These Tecuhtles were initiated with many ceremonies. First they were shut up forty or sixty days in one of their idols' temples, fasting continually, seeing no one except those who served them. At the expiration of this time, they were taken to the large temple, where were explained to them the great doctrines of the life they were to lead, they tormented them with many offensive and satirical words, and struck them, even in their faces, reprimanding them severely. Here they publicly gave them their bows and arrows and all kinds of military weapons used by them. From the temple they were conducted through the streets and squares of the city, with great pomp, rejoicing and solemnity. Going before them were many buffoons and jesters who said witty things to make the people laugh.

They put gold rings in their ears and upper lips and rich stones in their noses, piercing their ears, noses, and lips not with an instrument of iron, silver or gold, but with sharp bones of lions, tigers or eagles, offering the blood, which flowed from the wound, to their idols.

This new knight, made solemn and costly feasts, and gave large presents to the old noble knights such as clothes, slaves, gold, precious stones, rich feathers, military ornaments, shields, bucklers, and bows and arrows as a kind of perquisite, the same as our learned men do when they receive their degrees. They go from house to house among their brethren of this same order the Tecuhtles, interchanging presents with them. It was a republic and so they did not make many knights of poor nobles, but they made them of those who for noble and laudable acts had merited it.

Finally those who pierced the ears, lips and noses, were old knights and very old men who were appointed to do this and also as judges and councillors in time of war. These veteran knights had served in the republic and were feared, obeyed and reverenced in a very high degree. As already related, after fasting forty or sixty days, the candidates for knighthood were taken from the place where they had been fasting to the large temple where were the idols. Their ears, noses and lips, the lower lip, were pierced at the beginning of their fast, so that they might have time to heal perfectly, and cause no suffering, when the rings were put into them, which was done the day of the grand ceremonies. During all this time they did not bathe or wash themselves, but were stained and painted black, professing great humility in order to secure so great an honor and reward. During their retirement they guard their arms according to certain celebrated customs among them. They also had the doors of the room in which they were fasting, fastened with branches of laurel, which tree was highly esteemed by the natives.

No. X.—See Vol. I., p. 398.

EXTRACT FROM OVIEDO'S "HISTORIA DE LAS INDIAS," MS. LIB. XXIII., CAP. XLVI.

[This Chapter, which has furnished me with many particulars for the narrative, contains a minute account of Montezuma's household and way of life, gathered by the writer, as he tells us, from the testimony of different individuals of credit, who had the best means of information.

The room, where this great Prince Montezuma dined, was very large, and the walls were highly decorated with many colors. In this room there were dwarfs and buffoons, who said graceful and witty things, others who performed gymnastic feats which seemed impossible, and still others who played games, and did things quite wonderful. This room opened on a very large court-yard, around the outside of which were one hundred rooms twenty-five or thirty feet long, each separated from the other. These were the rooms of the principal lords, who were the regular guards of the palace, and were constantly occupied by more than six hundred men, each one of them having

more than thirty attendants, so that there never were less than three thousand warriors daily guarding the palace. When this great Prince wished to dine, his concubines gave him water with their own hands and twenty of the best loved and most beautiful of them stood near him while he ate. His major-domo placed before him more than three thousand differently prepared dishes, among which were chickens, quails, doves, turtle-doves and other birds, also young and tender children nicely stewed, besides many other dishes cooked in various ways, with a great deal of red pepper, etc., and he ate of what his women passed him or what he wished, after which, three thousand vessels and pitchers of a certain beverage were brought him, of which he drank what he liked. When he had finished eating and drinking, he again washed his hands, and the women retired to their apartments, where they were well served. Then the buffoons and others who had amused him while eating, were seated at one end of the room, and food given them. All that was left was sent to the people who were in that large yard. After this he gave audience, in the same room, to all who had business with him of any kind. Those who wished to speak with him, must do so on their knees, four yards or more distant, without shoes or cloak of any value, and without looking at his face. When he had answered them as he thought best, they rose from their knees and retired without turning their backs to him, until they were a good stone's throw distant, after the manner of the Moors of Granada when before their Lords and Princes. When the Spaniards went to see Montezuma he commanded his attendants to give them little benches or footstools of exquisite wood beautifully carved, on which to sit ; he then told the Spaniards to ask what they wished and he would give it them. He was a slight man, graceful and affable. There were five or six hairs in his beard as long as a span. If he fancied any garment that a Spaniard wore, he would ask it, and if given freely, without asking pay for it, he would take the garment, examine it carefully, and with pleasure, and praise it, but if a price was set upon it, he would pay it, and taking the garment return it to the Christian, and, as though disgusted with the bad manners of him who asked the price, would say : For me there ought not to be any price, because I am a Lord and they ought not to charge me anything, I will give without being asked. It is a great offence to those who are Lords to set a price upon anything, as that is to make merchants of them. This reminds one of the words of Scipio, as recorded by Luciano, who, in that excellent debate between the three greatest captains of ancient times, namely, Alexander the Great, Hannibal and Scipio, said : Since I was born, I have neither bought nor sold anything. So Montezuma said when they wished to sell him something : I will ask you nothing another day, for you have made me a merchant. Go to your homes, ask what you need and it will be given you. Do not return here, as I do not like commerce, nor those who engage in it, although I allow other men in my dominions to carry it on.

Montezuma had more than three thousand lords subject to him, each one of them having many vassals, They all had houses in Temixtitan where they were required to reside certain months in the year. When, by permission of Montezuma, one of them went to spend some time at his own lands, he had to leave in his house at court, his son or brother till his return. Montezuma kept these as pledges for the return of his subjects, and the security of his kingdom. His tax gatherers were killed if they made a mistake. His vassals gave him a regular tribute of every third son, and he who had no sons gave him an Indian or squaw to sacrifice to his Gods, and if he did not give it, he himself was sacrificed. One third of everything was given as tribute, and he who failed to do it, paid the penalty with his head. In every town he had a major-domo who kept a strict account of the number of persons, and the tribute they ought to pay, These accounts were kept in figures and char-

acters as well understood by them, as our letters and figures are understood by us. These major-domos rendered an account to those who resided in Temixtitan. There were granaries, warehouses and depositories where these tributes were stored and officers to guard them. He who did not promptly pay was imprisoned, a certain time was allowed him to pay, at the expiration of which, not having paid, he was executed or imprisoned.

* *

Let us leave this subject, and return to the great Prince Montezuma. He had a room one hundred and fifty feet long and fifty wide, the roof of which, supported by large beams and posts, formed a terrace. Within this room were many kinds of birds and animals, among them, fifty red-tailed eagles, tigers, wolves, and frightful snakes as large as one's leg, all in cages. Five hundred hens were daily allowed these animals, besides which they gave them the blood of the men, women and children who were sacrificed. The floor of the room was covered with human blood, and on entering the smell was terrible and extremely nauseating. The loud and horrible hissing of the snakes, the growling and roaring of the other animals there confined made infernal melody, and was enough to frighten any one. In the centre of this room was a chapel in the form of a large oven, the top being overlaid with gold and silver, in which were beautifully set stones of various kinds, agates, topazes, emeralds and many others. Here Montezuma retired to talk with the devil, who is their god of war and called by them Atezcatepoca. They believed that he was Lord and creator of all things, and that in his hands was the power to conquer. The Indians, in their songs and discourses gave him thanks and cried unto him in their necessities, In this yard and room there were always five thousand men painted a certain color, who kept inviolate their chastity. They strictly observed certain religious duties and are called popes.

* *

In a very large house, lived the four thousand concubines of Montezuma, who were daughters of nobles, and given to him, by his command. Montezuma occasionally gave to a person whom he particularly wished to favor and honor some of these women ; this gift was joyfully received and considered a wonderful one. In the house occupied by these women were many gardens and more than one hundred hot baths, like those used by the Moors, in which they bathed. Each one had a guard or keeper, and over these were other women like prioresses who governed them ; these last who were always old women, were respected as mothers, and treated those under them like daughters. Montezuma's father had more than one hundred and fifty sons and daughters. Montezuma killed nearly all his brothers and married his sisters to whomsoever he pleased. He himself had more than fifty sons and daughters, and it sometimes happened that fifty of his wives were pregnant at the same time, but the greater number of them killed their children, saying that the devil commanded them to do it, and to offer their blood as a sacrifice, which they did. The house of Montezuma seemed like a populous city. Each door had a porter and there were twenty for the service of the house. Through some of these flowed streams of water bearing upon their surface canoes loaded with corn, provisions and wood. The house was supplied with pure water from a spring called Chapictepeque, six miles distant. It had its source in the mountains and was brought by means of an aqueduct of stone.

No. XI.—See Vol. II., p. 40 et alibi.

DIALOGUE OF OVIEDO WITH DON THOAN CANO, AP. "HISTORIA DE LAS INDIAS," MS., LIB. XXXIII., CAP. LIV.

[The most remarkable, in some respects, of Oviedo's compositions is his *Quincuagenas*, a collection of imaginary dialogues with the most eminent persons of his time, frequently founded, no doubt, on the personal communications which he had held with them. In his "History of the Indies" he has also introduced a dialogue which he tells us he actually had with Don Thoan Cano, a Castilian hidalgo, who married Guatemozin's widow, the lovely daughter of Montezuma. He came into the country originally with Narvaez; and, as he was a man of intelligence, according to Oviedo, and his peculiar position both before and after the Conquest opened to him the best sources of information, his testimony is of the highest value. As such I have made frequent use of it in the preceding pages, and I now transcribe it entire, in the original, as an important document for the history of the Conquest.] Translated for this edition.

Dialogue between the Governor of the Fortress of the City and Port of Santo Domingo of the Spanish Island, and author of this history, on the one part, and on the other part, a gentleman of the great City of México, named Thoan Cano.

GOVERNOR.—Señor, I heard yesterday that you live in the great City of Mexico, that your name is Thoan Cano, and because I was a friend of a gentleman named Diego Cano, who was a follower or attendant of the Most Serene Prince Don Thoan, of glorious memory, I desire to know if he still lives, what is your native place, and how you came to be stopping here at present. I will consider it a great favor, should you not be displeased by my questions, because it is necessary that I know something from New Spain, and it is right, that to satisfy myself I try to get the information I desire from credible persons; therefore it will be a great favor to me, if you can answer me.

THOAN CANO.—Señor Governor, I am the one highly honored by your acquaintance, I have long desired to see you, and very earnestly wished to be your friend and servant. In answer to what you wish to know from me, let me say, that Diego Cano, Notary Public and clerk of the court of justice, for the house of Prince Don Thoan and steward of the tapestry of His Highness, was my uncle, who died a short time since in the City of Caceres, of which place I am a native. As to the rest, I, Señor, came from the Island of Cuba to New Spain with Captain Pámphilo de Narvaez, and though a youth of few years, I was near him when he was made prisoner by Hernando Cortés. At this critical time he lost an eye, but continued fighting like a very brave

man, however as there were few of his people with him and they did not assist him, he was wounded and taken prisoner. Cortés made himself master of the field, and drew to his standard the people who had come out with Pámphilo and until that time had fought with him, after all of which I find myself here. You command me to tell you why I have remained here, and do not wish me to be displeased with your questions. In reply to this last question, I will say, Señor Governor, that I married a Lady, legitimate daughter of Montezuma, called Doña Isabel, who, though she had been brought up in our own Spain, would not have been better educated, or better taught in the Catholic faith, and her conversation and grace of manner would gratify even you. As she is in all things a lady and a friend of the Christians, her example and the respect felt for her impresses upon the spirits of the Mexicans greater quiet and repose. Whatever else you may ask me about, Señor, I will tell you the truth as I remember it.

Gov.—I accept the favor you have just offered, and will commence by asking what first occurs to me, I remember being informed that Montezuma's father had more than one hundred and fifty sons and daughters, and that he sometimes happened to have fifty women pregnant at the same time; I wrote this and other things of the same nature in chapter forty-sixth of my history. Now, if this was true, I would like to know how you are sure that your wife, Doña Isabel, is the legitimate daughter of Montezuma and how your father-in-law knew the legitimate children from the illegitimate, also which were lawful wives and which were concubines.

Cano.—The customs observed among the Mexicans on taking a lawful wife, I will now describe, which are as follows: After a dinner or a supper participated in by the relatives of both parties, a ball is given, which is a religious ceremony, and songs are sung. At the hour for the bride and groom to retire to their bed-chamber a certain part of the garment of the bride is tied to the cloak worn by the groom, and thus united the nearest relatives of both take them by the hand and conduct them to their room, where they are left alone and in the dark. Here they remain for three consecutive days, no one being allowed to see them, excepting a squaw who gives them food and whatever else may be needed. During all this time the dance and singing are kept up. A marriage without this ceremony is not lawful, neither are the children legitimate, nor can they be heirs. When Montezuma died he left only two legitimate children, my wife and her brother, both very young. A brother of Montezuma, named Cuitcavaci, Lord of Iztapalapa was chosen guardian, but died of smallpox sixty days after his election; then a nephew of Montezuma named Guatimuici, a high priest among the Indians, killed his cousin, the legitimate son of Montezuma, who was called Asupacaci, own brother of Doña Isabel, thus making himself master, and was very courageous. He was the one who lost Mexico, who was imprisoned, and afterwards unjustly killed with other Lords and Indians. When Cortés and the Christians took possession of Mexico, my wife, as you see from the above, was the only living legitimate child of Montezuma, and she was a widow and childless. Her cousin, Guatimuici, had married her in accordance with the above ceremony, in order the better to protect her, as she was very young. She was converted to our Holy Catholic faith, and married an honest man, one of the first conquerors, called Pedro Gallego. A son was born to them whom they named Thoan Gallego Montezuma, after which said Pedro Gallego died, and I married said Doña Isabel, by whom God gave me three sons and two daughters, who are named Pedro Cano, Gonzalo Cano de Saavedva, Thoan Cano, Doña Isabel and Doña Catalina.

Gov.—Señor Thoan Cano, I beseech you to tell me why Hernando Cortés killed Guatimuici. Did he disclose anything, or what did he do that he should be put to death?

CANO.—You must know, that by command of Captain Hernando Cortés, Guatimuici, and the King of Tacuba, called Tetepanquezal, and the Lord of Tezcuco, were terribly tortured, they burned their feet, anointing the soles with oil, and holding them over live coals, and many other similar things, that they might compel them to tell where their treasures were concealed. By means of these tortures, he drew from them the fact, that Captain Cristóval de Olid had rebelled against his authority in Caballos and Honduras, which province is called by the Indians, Guaimuras, and he determined to go in search of and punish said Christoval de Olid ; with which end in view, he set out by land, taking with him many Spaniards and many natives ; he also took with him the three men above mentioned and hung them on the way. Doña Isabel thus become a widow, after which, she married, in the manner already described, Pedro Gallego, and after his death she married me.

GOV.—Hernando Cortés, in certain information sent to our lord the Emperor, says, that Guatimuici had succeeded Montezuma on the throne of Mexico because the son and heir of Montezuma was dead, and of the two sons that were left, one was crazy or a fool and the other a paralytic, and disqualified on account of illness, which, believing to be true, I wrote in chapter sixteenth of my history.

CANO.—You may write what he shall tell you, or what the Marquis Hernando Cortés wishes, but I tell you conscientiously and before God the truth, and this is very well known.

GOV.—Señor Thoan Cano, tell me what was the reason the Indians of Mexico rebelled when Hernando Cortés left that city in charge of Pedro Alvarado, Montezuma being in prison, and went in search of Pámphilo de Narvaez, I have heard many and very different accounts of this and would like to write the truth about it, so help me God.

CANO.—Señor Governor, you ask me something of which few persons now living can give an account, although it was publicly known, and the injustice done the Indians very evident. From this time they hated the Christians, they could not be trusted, and all the evils that followed, even the rebellion of Mexico, can be traced to this, of which I will now give you my version. At a certain season of the year, these Mexicans met to observe various idolatrous rites and ceremonies, and the time having arrived for one of these feasts, Alvarado being in charge of the city, Montezuma in prison, and Cortés absent, many of the principal Indians came together and asked permission of Captain Alvarado to celebrate this feast in the yards of their temples, and the said Captain gave them permission. So more than six hundred of the Indians, all Lords, met, wearing trinkets of gold, beautiful feathers, many precious stones, and adorned in every way possible, but without arms either offensive or defensive, and danced and sang and celebrated their feast according to their customs. When they were at the height of their enjoyment, and completely absorbed in it. Alvarado, influenced by covetousness, stationing fifteen men at each one of the five doors, he, with the rest of the Spaniards entered, and without mercy, began to cut and to kill the Indians, not sparing even one. This was the cause of the rebellion, for seeing their companions robbed and killed without having merited such cruelty, they, with good reason, made war upon said Alvarado and the Christians, who, with him, were guarding Montezuma.

GOV.—How did Montezuma die? I have heard very different accounts of it, and have thus written them.

CANO.—Montezuma was hit by a stone thrown by one of his own people, the blow causing his death. His people could not see him, a soldier with a shield being placed before him, and not believing he was there, they threw stones, one of which killed him. But I wish you to know, Señor Governor, that from the first rebellion of the Indians until the Marquis returned to the

city, after having made Narvaez prisoner, notwithstanding the quarrel with the Christians, Montezuma always supplied them with food, and after the Marquis returned, he gave him a grand reception, and gave to all the Spaniards a great deal of food. You must know that as Captain Alvarado's conscience troubled him, although he had not repented of his fault, but wished to appease the wrath of Montezuma, he told Hernando Cortés to pretend that he wished to imprison and punish him, which Hernando Cortés did not wish to do, but said very angrily, that they were only dogs and that there was no need of that formality, and sent to one of the guards to set him at liberty. This officer seeing the anger of Cortés, the little regard he had for the living Indians and the little he thought about the murdered ones, determined upon revenge, and was the first to renew the war against the Spaniards, which was done within an hour.

GOV.—I have always heard it said that moderation is good, compassion is a virtue, and pride and anger abominable. It is said that Hernando Cortés divided great treasures among his soldiers, when he left the city, which he did by the advice of one Botello, who boasted that he could foretell what was to happen.

CANO.—I well know who this was, and it is true that he thought Cortés and the Christians should leave, but this was only known to those who were with him at the time of the conversation, the others, numbering two hundred and seventy, who were in their rooms, were left behind. These defended themselves for a certain time, fighting until hunger compelled them to surrender, when they were cruelly murdered, after the manner of Alvarado with their countrymen. Those upon whom Cortés had most liberally bestowed his gifts, those most burdened with gold and jewels were the first to be killed,—for, to save the pack-saddle, the ass most heavily laden died,—but those who had nothing save their weapons, cut their way out with their swords.

GOV.—It was a great pity to lose so much treasure, 154 Spaniards, 45 mares, and more than 2000 Indians, among their number the son and daughter of Montezuma, and all the other Lords that were in prison, I have thus written it in chapter fourteenth of this history.

CANO.—Señor Governor, truly he who told you this, either wished to deceive you, or he did not see, or know anything about it, I assure you that, including those who remained in the city and those who followed Cortés, more than 1170 Spaniards lost their lives, and of the Indians, our friends of Tascaltecle instead of 2000 as you say, without doubt, more than 8000 perished.

GOV.—It is a wonder to me that, after Cortés and those who escaped took refuge in the land of Tascaltecle, they were not all killed. It is said that the people of Guanlip, would not give them food, unless they gave gold in exchange.

CANO.—Do not believe any of this, Señor, for these Christians could not have been better received even in their fathers' houses. All they wished, even without asking it, was given gratuitously and willingly.

GOV.—The Marquis has done a great deal, and is worthy of all that he possesses and much more, I am sorry to see so valiant a gentleman maimed, having lost two fingers of his left hand, which I have so written in the fifteenth chapter of my history. But such is war, the honors and glories of which are not gained sleeping.

CANO.—Doubtless, Senor, Cortés has been a sagacious and successful captain and ought to receive honors and favors from those whom he has served, I have seen some, however, who serve and labor, but they never grow rich, and others who do not do as much are rewarded and promoted. Do not waste any more sympathy upon the Marquis for the loss of his fingers, as he is as sound to-day as when he first came from Castile ; he never lost his fingers, so there was no need of a surgeon, neither of a miracle to heal him.

Gov.—Senor Thoan Cano, I am told and wish to know if it is true, that the Marquis cruelly treated the people of Chulula, a city through which he passed the first time he was in Mexico.

Cano.—It is very true, but I did not see it, for I had not yet reached that land, but I heard it from many who saw this cruel exploit.

Gov.—What is the account you heard of it?

Cano.—The well known facts, which I heard, are these, that Hernando Cortés asked, of that city, 3000 Indians to carry the luggage, who were given him, and he had them all put to the sword, not one escaped.

Gov.—Our Lord the Emperor is right in commanding to take the Indians from all the Christians.

Cano.—Do what His Majesty shall command, and what would please him, which is best for you, but I would not wish that the just should suffer for the sinner. Let him who is cruel pay the penalty, but why punish him who commits no fault? I have not now time to discuss this subject, for I must embark to night, and it is already nearly time for evening devotions. Señor Governor, if I can serve you in any way in Mexico, I will do so most cheerfully. With regard to the liberty of the Indians, doubtless there are persons who should be urged, to take, govern and instruct them in the Holy Catholic faith, and again others, from whom they should be taken, but the Bishop of Chiapa, Friar Bartolomé de Las Casas, who has been the moving power in making these changes, is here, accompanied by young brothers of his order, with whom, Señor Governor, you can confer about this matter. I do not wish to interfere or speak about it, though I have my own opinion.

Gov.—Doubtless, Señor Thoan Cano, you speak like a prudent man, and these things must be so ordained of God, I suppose that this Reverend Bishop of Ciudad Real in the province of Chiapa, has been influenced to make these pilgrimages by zeal in the service of God and His Majesty. God grant that he and his brethren succeed in this service. He is not, however, so kindly disposed toward me as you think, but has complained of me on account of what I wrote about certain acts of his, when he went to Cubagua and Cumaná. He made his complaint to the Bishop of San Juan, Don Rodrigo de Bastidas, in order that he might make it known to me, which he did, I replied by begging the Bishop of San Juan to say to him, that, in truth, when I wrote that of which he complained, I had no thought of pleasing or displeasing him, only of telling what actually took place; that he could look at the first volume of the History of the Indies, printed in 1535, where he could find what I wrote; that I could easily prove all that I had said; that he should know that this book, although written in Spanish, was already translated into the Tuscan, French, German, Latin, Greek, Turkish and Arabic languages: that I should not cease writing about the Indies so long as I might serve and please Their Majesties; that I hoped God would help me to succeed better in the future than in the past, and also that the labors of my pen might be more pleasing to him. As the Bishop of San Juan is so noble, the truth so evident, and I wrote so calmly, the Bishop of Chiapa was satisfied, although I did not do it to satisfy him or any other person, but because I felt it to be right. As regards the Friars, there are so many of them here, that it seems in truth, that they must have rained down or sprung from the ground. They are all young, under thirty, and without gray hairs, God grant that they all may succeed in serving him. I saw them enter this City, two by two, thirty of them, with their staves, gowns, scapulars and hats, and the Bishop behind them. It did not appear like a very devout company, and now they commence, we do not know in what it will stop; time will tell, and this is done in the service of our Lord. As you are going toward those new volcanoes, tell me, Señor, if you have seen them, what are they, and what is another that you have in New Spain which is called Guaxocinco?

CANO.—The volcano of Chalco or Guaxocinco is one and the same thing, the light of which might be seen at night at a distance of nine or twelve miles or more; by day smoke continually issued from it, and sometimes flames of fire. It is one of the Sierra Nevada range, never free from snow, and about twenty-seven miles from Mexico. This irruption continued for seven years, more or less, after the arrival of Hernando Cortés, but has now ceased. There is no end to the sulphur found in its crater, which is of very good quality and is taken out and used in making powder. In Guatemala there are two volcanoes, which throw out very large red-hot stones, and volumes of smoke. It is a terrible spectacle and was especially so when Doña Beatriz de la Cueva, wife of the Governor Don Pedro de Alvarado died. Give me leave to go on board my vessel and may God be with you, Señor Governor.

GOV.—Señor Thoan Cano, may the Holy Spirit go with you, and give you such a prosperous voyage, that in a few days you may arrive at your house, and may find Doña Isabel and your sons and daughters enjoying the degree of health, that you and they desire.

No. XII.—See Vol. II., p. 78.

GRANT OF CORTES TO DONA ISABEL MONTEZUMA, DAUGHTER OF THE EMPEROR MONTEZUMA; DATED AT MEXICO, JUNE 27, 1526.

[Montezuma, on his death-bed, commended, as we have seen in the History, three favorite daughters to the protection of Cortés. After their father's death they were baptized, and after the Conquest were married to Spaniards of honorable family, and from them have descended several noble houses in Spain. Cortés granted, by way of dowry, to the eldest, Doña Isabel, the city of Tacuba and several other places, embracing an extensive and very populous district. I have given here the instrument containing this grant, which has a singular degree of interest, from the notices it contains of Montezuma's last moments, and the strong testimony it bears to his unswerving friendship for the Spaniards. Some allowance must be made by the reader for the obvious endeavor of Cortés to exhibit Montezuma's conduct in so favorable a light to the Castilian government, as might authorize the extensive grant to his daughter.

The instrument in the Munoz collection was taken from an ancient copy in the library of Don Rafael Floranes of Valladolid.]

Grant to Doña Isabel Montezuma, daughter of the great Montezuma, last Indian King of the great kingdom and city of Mexico, who, having become a Christian, was baptized and married to Alonso Grado, native of the town of

Alcantara, nobleman and follower of His Majesty, whom he had served and was serving in many offices in that kingdom.

Executed by Don Hernando Cortés, conqueror of said kingdom, in the name of His Majesty, as Captain-General and Governor of New Spain.

Whereas, at the time that I, Don Hernando Cortés, Captain-General and Governor of this New Spain, for His Majesty, arrived in this land, with certain ships and people, to pacify and colonize it, and bring its people under the dominion and service of the Imperial Crown of His Majesty, as it is at present, I had information of a great lord called Montezuma, who resided in the large city of Tenextitan, and was lord of it and of all the provinces and lands bordering upon it, to him, I made known my arrival by messengers, in order that he should obey me in the name of His Majesty and should offer himself as his subject. He seemed pleased with my coming and the better to prove his zeal and willingness to serve His Majesty and to obey, what by me in his royal name should be commanded, he showed me much attention and gave orders, that in all places through which the Spaniards should pass, on their way to the city, they should be well received, and that they should be furnished with all that they might need, which was always done. When we reached the city, we were very well received, I and all who were with me, and he seemed to be very sorry for some encounters and battles we had on the way, before arriving at this city, trying to excuse them. In order the better to show his kind feeling toward us, said Montezuma consented to be in subection to the will of His Majesty and in my power like a prisoner, until I could give His Majesty an account of things in these parts and of the good will of said Montezuma. This said land, more than six hundred acres of it from one part to the other, was in peace and tranquillity, having been pacified by me, for the continuance of which, I had a seal and a pledge in the person of said Montezuma, who always showed good will in the service of His Majesty and a desire to please me in his royal name. This peace continued for more than a year, until the coming of Pámphilo de Narvaez who disturbed and scandalized them by his damnable words and the fears he awakened in their minds, on account of which, a brother of said Montezuma, named Auit Lavaci, Lord of Iztapalapa, rose against him, and with a large force that he brought, made pitiless war upon the said Montezuma, upon me and the Spaniards who were with me, strongly blockading us in the apartments and houses where we were. In order that the said brother and the principal men who were with him cease said war and raise the blockade, the said Montezuma stood in a window, from which he spoke to them, commanding them and advising them that they should not continue this war, saying that they ought to be subjects of His Majesty, that they should obey the commands that I, in his royal name, gave them; whereupon they threw many stones at him, one of which wounded him severely in the head. Fearing he might die from the effect of it, he discoursed with me about various matters, reminding me that he was now suffering from this wound and the insult of his people, because of the great love he had for the service of His Majesty, and for me in his royal name and for all the Spaniards, which he did not regret. He prayed me and charged me very earnestly, that, remembering how much he loved me and desired to please me, I, should he die of the wound, would take charge of his three daughters, have them baptized and taught our religion, for he knew that it was very good. After I had conquered said city, I had them baptized and named; the oldest, who is his legitimate heir, Doña Isabel, and the other two, Doña Maria and Doña Marina. In his last moments, for he died of the wound, he called me again, and earnestly prayed me that I would care for these daughters, saying that they were the best jewels he had given me, that I should divide among them what he left, remembering especially the oldest, whom he loved very tenderly, and that if God should spare his life and

give him the victory over his enemies, he would show me more fully his desire of serving His Majesty and give me stronger proofs of his love for me. He also wished me to give an account to his Majesty of his having left his daughters to my care, and to entreat him in his name, to be pleased to command me to look after them, and to keep them under my protection and administration, for he was a servant and subject of His Majesty, and had always been kindly disposed toward the Spaniards, as I had seen, and for this love which he bore them, he had been so badly treated. Wherefore, in acknowledgment of the great services rendered His Majesty by the said Montezuma, his good offices in my behalf during his life, his kind treatment of the Spaniards, whom I, in his royal name had in my company, the zeal which he showed in his royal service, for, without doubt, he had no part in the rebellion of this city, said brother being the sole instigator thereof, his hope that he would be a great help in keeping the land always very peaceful and that the natives would learn to understand us and would voluntarily contribute to His Majesty large sums of money, gold and jewels, and other things, which, on account of the coming of said Narvaez and the war which said brother Auit Lavaci commenced, is all lost, and considering also that it would be for the service of God our Lord and His Majesty that I plant in this land our holy religion, and also that the said daughter of Montezuma and the lords and principal persons among the natives of this New Spain be taught the Christian doctrine, in order to induce them to give up their idols, and bring them into the true knowledge of our holy Catholic faith, especially the children of the chief men, as was Montezuma, and that in this I discharge the duty of His Majesty, as well as my own, I thought best to accept, in his royal name, the trust, and to take into my house said three daughters, where they are to be treated in the best manner possible and to be taught the commandments of our holy Catholic faith and other good Christian customs, in order that they may love and serve God our Lord, and be an example to the rest of the natives of this land. It seemed best to me, considering the rank of said Doña Isabel, who is the oldest and legitimate heir of said Montezuma, and the one particularly recommended to my charge, and who on account of her age requires a companion, to give her for a husband, a person of reputation, a nobleman, who has served His Majesty in my company since he came to this land, filling, under me, in His Majesty's name, very honorable offices, such as Royal Treasurer, Lieutenant-Governor, and many others, all of which he has well filled. His name is Alonso Grado, he is a native of Alcantara, and is at present filling the office of Visitor-General of all the Indians of this New Spain. With the said Doña Isabel I promise and give as dowry to said Doña Isabel and her descendants, in the name of His Majesty, as Governor and Captain-General of this land and because it rightfully belongs to her as her inheritance, the dominion and natives of the town of Tacuba containing 120 houses, and Yeteve, a property having 40 houses, and Izqui Luca, another property having 120 houses, and Chimalpan, another landed property having 40 houses, and Chapulma Loyan, which has 40 houses, and Escapucaltango, having 20 houses, and Xiloango which has 40 houses, and another property called Ocoiacaque and Castepeque and Talanco and Goatrizco, and Duotepeque and Tacala, which may contain in all 1240 houses, said property and towns are subject to the town of Tacuba and its Governor. Said property I give in the name of His Majesty, as a dowry, that she may have, hold and enjoy it, by right of inheritance, now and forevermore, with the title of Lady of said town and of the rest herein contained, which I give in the name of his Majesty to fulfil his royal duty, and mine in his name, I hereby declare that it shall not be taken away from her, at any time nor by any means, and as a farther guarantee, I promise and certify to it in the name of His Majesty, and beg that His Majesty may be pleased to confirm the

grant to the said Doña Isabel and her heirs and successors, of the said town of Tacuba and the rest herein contained, as well as other properties subject to it, which are in the possession of some Spaniards ; said lands I did not give until I knew that it would be pleasing to His Majesty.

I hereby declare to be null and void whatever writing I may have given to any person granting privileges in the said town of Tacuba and other properties herein mentioned, and I in the name of His Majesty revoke them, and restore it and give it to the said Doña Isabel, in order that she may have it as her own, and as what rightfully belongs to her, I further command all persons, neighbors and dwellers in this New Spain, inhabitants of it, that they have and hold the said Doña Isabel as the ruler of said town of Tacuba with the said properties, that they do not interfere with her nor disturb anything of hers under penalty of 500 dollars * in gold for the exchequer of His Majesty. Dated June 26th, 1526.—Don Hernando Cortés.—By command of my Lord, the Governor—Alonso Baliente

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No. XIII.—See Vol. II., p 146.

MILITARY CODE ; DATED AT TLASCALA, DEC. 22, 1520.

[These Regulations, proclaimed by Cortés at Tlascala on the eve of the final march against Mexico, show the careful discipline established in his camp, and, to some extent, the nature of his military policy. The Code forms part of the collection of Muñoz.]

To-day, by the voice of a town-crier, were proclaimed his military regulations, to which, this is the preface.

For the reason, that in many writings and authentic chronicles, it is notorious and obvious to us, how much the ancients who followed the profession of arms tried and labored to introduce such and so good customs and ordinances with which and their own virtue and courage, they would be able to try for and to obtain victory and successful termination to the conquests and wars which they would have to make and to follow ; on the contrary, we see that great misfortunes, disasters and many deaths have happened when the people did not follow the good customs and order which they ought in war, and such disasters have happened when the enemy had but little strength, as is evident from many examples both ancient and modern, which here might be cited, and also because order is so laudable, that not only in human affairs but in divine it is loved and followed, and without it, nothing can be entirely successful, as it is the beginning, middle and end of the good administration of all things : Therefore I, Hernando Cortés, Captain-General and Chief Justice in this New Spain of the Ocean, by the very high, very powerful, and very Catholic Don Carlos our Lord, King elect of the Romans, future and always magnificent Emperor, King of Spain and of many other great kingdoms and dominions, considering all the aforesaid, and also that if our ancestors found it necessary to make regulations by which those who would have to follow and exercise the profession of arms should

* One dollar in gold, was equal to $11,67.

be governed and ruled, it is much more necessary and convenient for the Spaniards who at present are, and who may be in my company and for me, to follow and observe all the best customs and methods which may be possible, not only because it will better fit us for the service of God our Lord, and the sacred Catholic Majesty, but because we have as enemies and antagonists a most warlike and crafty people, and those who have a greater variety of weapons than any others of this generation, and especially because they are so many that they cannot be numbered, and we so few, so far separated, and destitute of all human aid. Seeing it to be very necessary for and beneficial to, the service of His Imperial Majesty, I commanded to make and made the regulations that are herein contained and signed by me and the undersigned, in the following manner.

Firstly.—Whereas by experience we have seen and every day see with what solicitude and vigilance the natives of this land worship and venerate their idols, in doing which they greatly dishonor God our Lord, and that the devil, having blinded and deceived them, is greatly revered by them, and that in dissuading them from so much error and idolatry, and instructing them in the knowledge of our Holy Catholic faith God will be served, and besides acquiring future glory for our souls by preventing the loss of so many, here in this world God would always help and succor us; therefore, with all my soul I exhort and beseech all Spaniards who may go to the present war with me, and to any wars and conquests which they might go under my command in the name of His Majesty, that their principal motive and intention be to dissuade from and eradicate the said idolatries in all the natives of these parts and reclaim them, or at least desire their salvation, and that they may be brought to the knowledge of God and our Holy Catholic faith, because, if the war should be carried on with other intentions, it would be unjust and His Majesty would have no reason to reward those who had engaged in it. I charge this upon the consciences of said Spaniards, and solemnly declare in the name of His Majesty that my principal intention and motive in making this war and the others which I have made, is to bring and reclaim the said natives to said knowledge of our holy faith and its beliefs, and afterwards to subdue them and bring them under the royal and imperial government of his Sacred Majesty, to whom lawfully belongs the dominion of all these lands.

Item.—God our Lord is greatly dishonored by swearing and blasphemy, which is the greatest offence we can offer his very holy name, and for which he visits severe and hard punishments upon his people; but we are so evil, that for the wonderful blessings we daily receive of him we not only fail to return thanks, but more than this, we say wicked things and blaspheme his holy name. To prevent such a detestable custom and sin, I command, that no person of whatever rank or condition be so daring as to say, I do not believe in God, nor swear, nor deny the existence of heaven or power of God, and that this command hold good with respect to the Virgin Mary and all the saints, the penalty for which, in addition to that established by the laws of the kingdom against blasphemy, shall be, that the person guilty of the above shall pay fifteen castellanos in gold—[a castellano is equal to $11.67]—one third of which shall go to the first society or brotherhood of the Virgin Mary that shall be founded in this land, one third to the exchequer of His Majesty and the other third to the judge who shall pass the sentence.

Item.—Because hard words, cursing, blasphemy and other irregularities, many and the greater number of times have their origin in gambling, it is just that I prohibit all this; therefore I command that in the future no person dare to play at cards or other games, betting money, jewels or any other thing, under penalty of losing all that he bets and twenty dollars in gold beside,—[a castellano and one dollar in gold are of equal value],—one half of it for the treasury, and the other half for the judge who shall sentence him. How-

ever, as in war, it is well that the people have some exercise, and is the custom and is permitted to play some games, in order to prevent worse irregularities, therefore I permit games of cards and others, excepting dice, in moderation, in the apartment where I might be, for here bad language will not be used, or if used, it will be punished.

Item.—Let no one dare to use a sword, dagger or other weapon, to offend any Spaniard, under penalty, if he be a nobleman, of paying one hundred dollars in gold, one half for His Majesty's exchequer and the other half for the expenses of the sentence; but if the offender be not a nobleman, he shall receive one hundred lashes publicly administered.

Item.—Whereas it happens that some Spaniards neglect to enroll their names in the lists the captains have of the people, therefore I command that all enroll themselves in the companies that I have formed and may form, except those persons I shall indicate and for whom I will make other arrangements, and those who do not so enlist, will have no part or parts of the booty. Moreover, inasmuch as it sometimes happens that in jest and to pass the time, some persons who are in one company ridicule and dispute with those of another company, and these speak evil of the others and the others of them, from which may arise questions and scandals; therefore I command that from this time onward no one dare to ridicule or speak evil of any company nor malign them, under penalty of twenty dollars in gold, the half for the treasury and the other half for the expense of the sentence.

Moreover, that none of said Spaniards neither lodge nor board in any place except the place where his captain lodges, under penalty of twelve dollars in gold, applied in the same form as the preceding.

Item.—That no captain lodge in any town, village or city except in the town which may be assigned him by his commanding officer, under penalty of ten dollars in gold, applied in the manner above stated.

Item.—In order that each captain may have his company better organized, I command that each one of said captains divide his troops into companies of twenty, each company to be under a corporal, who must be a capable person and one worthy of confidence, under penalty above mentioned.

Moreover, that each one of said corporals go over his beat every quarter of an hour while on duty, under penalty above stated, and that the guard he may find sleeping or absent from his post, pay four castellanos, applied in the form above mentioned, and in addition be chained half a day.

Moreover, that said corporal must be careful to notify, and must notify, the guards who go on duty, that, placed on duty in the camp, they may not abandon nor leave the streets, doors or passages which they were commanded to guard, and go from them to any other place, on any account whatsoever, until they be commanded, under penalty of fifty castellanos, if the offender be a nobleman, the money to be applied in the way above stated; but if the offender be not a nobleman, let him be given one hundred lashes publicly.

Moreover, that each captain who was by me appointed, have and bring with him his drum and banner in order that he may the better command and lead the people under his charge, under penalty of ten dollars in gold, to be applied in the way above stated.

Moreover, that every Spaniard who may hear the beat of his company's drum, be obliged to come out and follow his flag fully equipped for war, under penalty of twenty castellanos, to be applied in the way above stated.

Moreover, that each time I may command the camp to remove to some other place, each captain be obliged to lead on the road all his troops, together and separated from the other companies, without allowing any Spaniard of any other company to intermingle with them, and to accomplish this they may compel and oblige those under their flag, so to conduct themselves, according to the customs of war, under penalty of ten dollars in gold, to be applied in the way above stated.

Item.—Whereas it sometimes happens that before or at the time of commencing hostilities, some Spaniards conceal themselves in the equipage, which, beside being cowardly, is a very bad example for the Indians, our friends who go with us to war; therefore I command that no Spaniard may meddle or go with the equipage, except those who may be appointed to do it, under penalty of twenty dollars in gold, to be applied as above stated.

Moreover, inasmuch as it sometimes happens that some Spaniards, out of order, and without being commanded, attack or break in upon a squadron of the enemy, and so disobeying, break the ranks, are out of order, and by so doing increase our danger; therefore I command that no captain order an attack upon the enemy without first being commanded by me, under penalty of death. Should a nobleman transgress this order he shall pay a penalty of one hundred dollars, to be applied as above stated, but if the one who disobeys be not a nobleman, let him receive publicly one hundred lashes

Item.—Whereas it might happen that at the time of entering to take by force any town, village or city from the enemy, before all of them are put out, some Spaniard, desiring to plunder, might enter a house of the enemy, where he might receive an injury; therefore I command that no Spaniard nor Spaniards enter to rob or to do any other thing in the enemies' houses, until all persons in them are put out, and the victory is complete, under penalty of twenty dollars in gold, to be applied as above stated.

Item.—To prevent and avoid frauds and concealed thefts, which are committed in war and out of it, and to secure the fifth part of everything, which belongs to His Catholic Majesty, and because the booty must be divided according to the services and merits of each one; therefore I command, that all the gold, silver, pearls, stones, plumage, clothes, slaves and whatever else may be acquired, had or taken, in whatever manner, in said towns, villages or cities, as well as in the country, by any person or persons, that the said person or persons into whose power it might come, or they should find it or take it, in whatever form it may be, they immediately bring it and exhibit before me, or before some other person, without carrying it to their lodging or any other place, under penalty of death and loss of all his goods to the exchequer of His Majesty.

In order that the aforesaid, and each and every part of it, be kept and complied with according to and in the manner above stated, and that no one pretend ignorance of anything contained in the above, I command that it be publicly proclaimed in order that it come to the knowledge of everybody.

Said ordinances were made in the city and province of Taxclateque, sealed the 22nd day of the month of December, year of the birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ, 1520.

Said regulations, above contained were publicly proclaimed, in the city and province of Taxclatecle, St. Stephen's day, Wednesday, the 26th day of December, year of the birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ, 1520, being present the Magnificent Señor Fernando Cortés, Captain-General and Chief Justice of this New Spain of the Ocean, by authority of our Lord the Emperor, before me, Juan de Rivera, Clerk and Notary Public, in all the kingdoms and dominions of Spain for the Royal and Apostolic authority. The which was publicly proclaimed, in a loud voice, by Antonio Garcia, town-crier, before a review of the people on foot and on horseback, that his grace commanded to make and which was made said day, to which the following named persons being present, were witnesses, Gonzalo de Sandoval, High Constable, Alonso de Prado, Royal Treasurer, Rodrigo Alvarez Chico, Inspector for His Majesty, and many other persons. Dated as above.

JUAN DE RIVERA.

No. XIV.—See Vol. II., p. 340.

TRANSLATION OF PASSAGES IN THE HONDURAS LETTER OF CORTES.

[I have noticed this celebrated Letter, the *Carta Quinta* of Cortés, so particularly in the body of the work, that little remains to be said about it here. I have had these passages translated to show the reader the circumstantial and highly graphic manner of the general's narrative, The latter half of the Letter is occupied with the events which occurred in Mexico, in the absence of Cortés, and after his return. It may be considered, therefore, as part of the regular series of his historical correspondence, the publication of which was begun by archbishop Lorenzana. Should another edition of the Letters of Cortés be given to the world, this one ought, undoubtedly, to find a place in it.]

A lake of great width and proportionate depth was the difficulty which we had to encounter. In vain did we turn to the right and to the left ; the lake was equally wide in every direction. My guides told me that it was useless to look for a ford in the vicinity, as they were certain the nearest one was towards the mountains, to reach which would necessarily be a journey of five or six days. I was extremely puzzled what measure to adopt. To return was certain death ; as, besides being at a loss for provisions, the roads, in consequence of the rains which had prevailed, were absolutely impassable. Our situation was now perilous in the extreme ; on every side was room for despair, and not a single ray of hope illumined our path. My followers had become sick of their continual labor, and had as yet reaped no benefit from their toils. It was therefore useless for me to look to them for advice in our present truly critical position. Besides the primitive band and the horses, there were upwards of three thousand five hundred Indians who followed in our train. There was one solitary canoe lying on the beach, in which, doubtless, those whom I had sent in advance had crossed. At the entrance of the lake, and on the other side, were deep marshes, which rendered our passage of the lake considerably more doubtful. One of my companions entered into the canoe, and found the depth of the lake to be five and twenty feet, and, with some lances tied together, I ascertained that the mud and slime were twelve feet more, making in all a depth of nearly forty feet. In this juncture, I resolved that a floating bridge should be made, and for this purpose requested that the Indians would lend their assistance in felling the wood, whilst I and my followers would employ ourselves in preparing the bridge. The undertaking seemed to be of such magnitude, that scarcely any one entertained an idea of its being completed before our provisions were all exhausted. The Indians, however, set to work with the most commendable zeal. Not so with

the Spaniards, who already began to comment upon the labors they had undergone, and the little prospect which appeared of their termination. They proceeded to communicate their thoughts one to another, and the spirit of disaffection had now attained such a height, that some had the hardihood to express their disapprobation of my proceedings to my very face. Touched to the quick with this show of desertion when I had least expected it, I said to them, that I needed not their assistance ; and, turning toward the Indians who accompanied me, exposed to them the necessity we lay under of using the most strenuous exertions to reach the other side, for, if this point were not effected, we should all perish from hunger. I then pointed in the opposite direction, in which the province of Acalan lay, and cheered their spirits with the prospect of there obaining provisions in abundance, without taking into consideration the ample supply which would be afforded us by the caravels. I also promised them, in the name of your Majesty, that they should be recompensed to the fullest extent of their wishes, and that not a person who contributed his assistance should go unrewarded. My little oration had the best possible effect with the Indians, who promised, to a man, that their exertions should only terminate with their lives. The Spaniards, ashamed of their previous conduct, surrounded me and requested that I would pardon their late act ; alleging, in extenuation of their offence, the miserable position in which they were placed, obliged to support themselves with the unsavory roots which the earth supplied, and which were scarcely sufficient to keep them alive. They immediately proceeded to work, and, though frequently ready to fall from fatigue, never made another complaint. After four days' incessant labor the bridge was completed, and both horse and man passed without the slightest accident. The bridge was constructed in so solid a manner, that it would be impossible to destroy it otherwise than by fire. More than one thousand beams were united for its completion, and every one of them was thicker than a man's body, and sixty feet long.

. . . . .

At two leagues' distance from this place, the mountains commenced. From no words of mine, nor of a more gifted man, can your Majesty form an adequate idea of the asperity and unevenness of the place which we were now ascending. He, alone, who has experienced the hardships of the route, and who himself has been an eyewitness, can be fully sensible of its difficulty. It will be sufficient for me to say, in order that your Majesty may have some notion of the labor which we had to undergo, that we were twelve days before we got entirely free of it, — a distance altogether of eight leagues ! Sixty-eight horses died on the passage, the greater part having fallen down the precipices which abounded on every side ; and the few that escaped seemed so overcome, that we thought not a single one would ever afterwards prove serviceable. More than three months elapsed before they recovered from the effects of the journey. It never ceased to rain day or night, from the time we entered the mountain until we left it ; and the rock was of such a nature, that the water passed away without collecting in any place in sufficient quantity to allow us to drink. Thus, in addition to the other hardships which we had to encounter, was that most pressing of all, thirst. Some of the horses suffered considerably from the want of this truly necessary article, and, but for the culinary and other vessels which we had with us, and which served to receive some of the rain, neither man nor horse could possibly have escaped. A nephew of mine had a fall upon a piece of sharp rock, and fractured his leg in three or four places ; thus was our labor increased, as the men had to carry him by turns. We had now but a league to journey before we could arrive at Tenas, the place which I mentioned as belonging to the chief of Tayco ; but here a formidable obstacle presented itself, in a very wide and very large

river, which was swollen by the continued rains. After searching for some time, one of the most surprising fords ever heard of was discovered. Some huge jutting cliffs arrest the progress of the river, in consequence of which it extends for a considerable space around. Between these cliffs are narrow channels, through which the water rushes with an impetuosity which baffles description. From one of these rocks to another we threw large trunks of trees, which had been felled with much labor. Ropes of bass-weed were affixed to these trunks; and thus, though at imminent risk of our lives, we crossed the river. If any body had become giddy in the transit, he must unavoidably have perished. Of these passes there were upwards of twenty, and we took two whole days to get clear, by this extraordinary way.

. . . . .

It were, indeed, an arduous task for me to describe to your Majesty the joy which pervaded every countenence, when this truly inspiring account was received. To be near the termination of a journey so beset with hardships and labor, as ours had been, was an event that could not but be hailed with rapture. Our last four days' march subjected us to innumerable trials; as, besides being without any certainty of our proceeding in the right direction, we were ever in the heart of mountains abounding with precipices on every side. Many horses dropped on the way; and a cousin of mine, Juan Davilos by name, fell down a precipice and broke an arm. Had it not been for the suit of armor which he wore, he would have been infallibly dashed to pieces. As it was, besides having his arm broken, he was dreadfully lacerated. His horse, upon which he was mounted, having no protection, was so wounded by the fall, that we were obliged to leave him behind. With much difficulty we succeeded in extricating my cousin from his perilous situation. It would be an endless task to relate to your Majesty the many sufferings which we endured; amongst which the chief was from hunger; for, although we had some swine which we had brought from Mexico, upwards of eight days had elapsed without our having tasted bread. The fruit of the palm-tree boiled with hogs' flesh, and without any salt, which we had exhausted some time previous, formed our only sustenance. They were alike destitute of provisions at the place at which we had now arrived, where they lived in constant dread of an attack from the adjoining Spanish settlement. They needed not to fear such an event; as, from the situation in which I found the Spaniards, they were incapable of doing the slightest mischief. So elated were we all with our neighborhood to Nico, that all our past troubles were soon forgotten, as are the dangers of the sea by the weather-beaten sailor, who, on his arrival in port, thinks no more of the perils he has encountered. We still suffered greatly from hunger; for even the unsavory roots were procured with the greatest difficulty; and, after we had been occupied many hours in collecting them, they were devoured with the greatest eagerness, in the shortest space of time imaginable.

No XV.—See Vol. II., p. 343.

LAST LETTER OF CORTES TO THE EMPEROR.

[I give this letter of Cortés entire, *Ultima y Sentidísima Carta*, his "Last and most touching Letter," as it is styled by Vargas Ponçe, who has embraced it in his important collection from the archives of Seville. It may be called touching, when we consider the tone of it, as compared with the former correspondence of its author, and the gloomy circumstances under which it was written. Yet, we are not to take the complaints contained in it of his poverty too literally; since, at his death, but three years after, he left immense estates. But these estates were so much embarrassed by his expensive and disastrous expeditions in the South Sea, that his income during the rest of his life seems to have been scarcely sufficient to meet his ordinary expenditure. The last days of Cortés, wasted in ineffectual attempts to obtain redress from the Court whom he had so signally served, remind us of the similar fate of Columbus. The history of both may teach us, that the most brilliant career too often leads only to sorrow and disappointment, as the clouds gather round the sun at his setting.]

I thought, that having labored in my youth, I might have reaped the benefit of it, and in my old age, I might have rest. For forty years I have spent sleepless nights, have eaten bad food, and sometimes neither good nor bad, carried my weapons by my side, exposed my person to danger, spent my property and life, all in the service of God, bringing sheep to his fold, which sheep are very far from our empire, unknown, not even spoken of in our books, and increasing and spreading the name and patrimony of my King, gaining for him and bringing under his yoke and royal sceptre, many and very large kingdoms, and possessions of many barbarous nations and people, gained by me at my own expense, without being helped by anyone, rather, have been very much hindered by our many rivals, and jealous persons, who, like leeches, have bursted, satiated with my blood. For my labors and vigils in the service of God, I am sufficiently rewarded because. . . I was used as the instrument in his service, and the people would attribute some part to me, though one who shall be acquainted with me, will perceive what I plainly see, that the Divine Providence wished to accomplish this great work by the weakest and most useless medium that could be found, in order that all the glory be attributed to God, As regards what was left for my King to do, the remuneration was always satisfactory, for, other things being equal, it could not be less, being in Your Majesty's time, for the kingdom of which I

am a native, and which was benefited by these services, never had such a great Catholic Prince, and magnanimous and powerful King; and Your Majesty, the first time that I kissed your hand and gave into your charge the fruits of my services, seemed to appreciate them, and began to show a desire to reward me, honoring me by words and deeds, which, seeming to me more than I merited, Your Majesty knows that I refused. Your Majesty told me to accept, and commanded that I should accept them, for it seemed that you wished to confer an honor upon me, and that you did not wish me to receive it as pay for my services, for Your Majesty wished to do with me as is done with a target, the first shots fall outside the target, but trying many times, some strike it, some touch the centre, and at last the eye is pierced, so this favor Your Majesty did me fell outside of the target, but that you would continue until the very height of what I merited was reached ; that of what I had, nothing should be taken from me, neither ought it to be, and that I must receive what was given me, so I kissed Your Majesty's hands, leaving your presence, whereupon all that I had was taken from me, and the favors Your Majesty had granted, were not fulfilled. Beside these gifts that Your Majesty bestowed, I have still greater ones promised me, in letters of Your Majesty, signed with your royal name, which, as you have such a good memory, you will not have forgotten. Surely the services rendered up to that time will deserve the honors and promises Your Majesty bestowed, and I have since done nothing unworthy, having never ceased to serve you and enlarge the patrimony of these kingdoms under a thousand hindrances, which if I had not had, the increase would have been greater. For the reason that my deeds merit them, I do not know why the promises and favors offered me are not fulfilled. If they wish to say, they will not be taken from me, then I possess something, but now I am uncertain. I cannot reap the fruit of these possessions, which would be better not to have, for then I would have occupied myself in my own affairs and not spent the s. . . of them to defend myself against Your Majesty's Attorney-General, which has been and is more difficult than to conquer and gain the land from an enemy. My labors have secured for me a contented mind, having done my duty, but I have not obtained any pecuniary benefit from them, for not only. . . repose has not come as a consequence to my old age, but work until death : God grant that it may not pass into the beyond, but may end with the body and not extend itself perpetually, for he who has so much trouble to defend his body, cannot but offend against his soul. I beg Your Majesty will not permit such notorious services to have so little consideration. It is not to be supposed that it is Your Majesty's fault that the people know it, because this work, which God wrought, using me as the means, is so great and so marvelous that the fame of it has extended throughout all the dominions of Your Majesty and of other Christian kings, and even to some pagan nations. In those where the lawsuit between the Attorney and myself is known, they talk of nothing else, some attribute the blame to the fiscal, others lay it to me, but even these do not find my fault so great, that they would wish to deprive me of life, honor and property, and those who do not find the fault mine, do not blame Your Majesty. If Your Majesty should wish to take from me, what you gave me, power have you to do it, for to him who wills to do, and can do, there is nothing impossible. It is said that they are looking for means of making this work seem plausible, but the intention is unbecoming, and kings anointed by God do not and cannot make use of such means, for to the eye of God, all things are perfectly clear, and as regards the world there is no need to make it plausible, for so I wish it, so I command it ; it is the acquittal of what kings do. I begged Your Majesty, in Madrid, to be pleased to make plain the desire you had of granting me favors in payment of my services, and brought to your memory some of them. Your Majesty told me

that you would command your council to dispatch me, as you had already told them what they must do. Your Majesty told me that you did not wish me to bring suit against the fiscal; but they told me that I must defend myself against the demand of the fiscal, because it must go through a court of justice, and by it must be sentenced, I complained of it as vexatious, and wrote to Your Majesty at Barcelona, begging you, that as you were pleased to enter into judgment with your servant, it might be before judges above suspicion. Your Majesty commanded that, with the Council of the Indies, some of the others should meet, all being followers of Your Majesty, and together decide the question. I see myself old and poor, in debt in this kingdom for more than twenty thousand ducats, having spent that and one hundred more, which I brought with me, and I am told that I owe more than this, also that they have borrowed some to send me, and.....

It is no wonder that I have spent this amount, for it is nearly five years since I left my home. I have three children with me, and am in court all the time, paying lawyers, agents and solicitors, which money would have been better employed, had Your Majesty made use of it and of what I might have acquired in this time; the going to Algiers has also contributed to the delay. It seems to me that I ought not to trust this matter to broken vessels, nor leave it to a tribunal of few persons, but ought again to supplicate Your Majesty to be pleased to bring this matter before all the judges Your Majesty has in his court, in order that the decision may be a just one. I am sorry that the Bishop of Cuenca should be one of the judges, because he and the licentiate Salmeron, a newly appointed judge in this Council of the Indies, being judges in New Spain, are those who despoiled me without a hearing, as I can prove, and with whom I have a suit about said despoliation, asking them the interest and rent of the property of which they despoiled me, and it is very clear they will not pronounce sentence against themselves. I did not wish to object to them in this case, but Your Majesty not being pleased to appoint more judges to act upon it, I am obliged to challenge Salmeron and the Bishop of Cuenca, which in my soul I am sorry to do, as it will occasion still greater delay, which for me is one of the worst things that could happen, as I am sixty years old, it is going on five since I left my home; I have only one male heir, and although my wife is young, and could have more children, my age gives me little room to hope. If I should not have another son, and God should order that this one leave no sons, of what advantage would my acquisitions be to me, for daughters inheriting my estates, my name would be lost and forgotten. Again and yet again, I beseech Your Majesty to grant that, with the judges of the Council of the Indies, other judges of other councils may meet. Since all are servants of Your Majesty, and you confide to them the government of your kingdoms, and your royal conscience, it is not inconsistent to confide to them the decision about a writing, granting favors, which Your Majesty made, giving to your subject a very small part of a grand whole, which he acquired for Your Majesty, without labor or danger to a royal person, nor care of spirit in providing ways of doing it, nor money to pay the people who did it, and he also served you so cleanly and loyally, not only in the land which he gained, but with a great quantity of gold and silver, and precious stones, the spoils of war. May it please Your Majesty to command the judges to examine, decide, and pass sentence, in a certain time fixed upon by Your Majesty without so much delay. This will be for me a great favor, for if it is long delayed, I will leave it and lose it, and return to my house. I am already too old to wander about in hotels, but wish to live retired and arrange my account with God, for I have a long one and little time left to settle it, and it will be better to lose my property than my soul. May God our Lord keep the very Royal person of Your Majesty with the increase of kingdoms and estates that Your Majesty may desire.

Valladolid, Feb, 3rd. 1544. Your Majesty's very humble servant and subject, who kisses your very Royal feet and hands.—Marquis del Valle (of the Valley.)

Addressed to the Sacred Catholic Cesaræn Majesty, Emperor and King of Spain.

To His Majesty, from the Marquis del Valle.—Feb. 3rd. 1544.—*Archives of the Indies.*

No. XVI.—See Vol. II., p. 350.

FUNERAL OBSEQUIES OF CORTES.

[The original of this document is in the Hospital of Jesus, at Mexico ; and the following literal translation was made from a copy sent to me from that capital.]

THE INTERMENT OF THE MARQUESS OF THE VALLEY OF OAJACA, HERNAN CORTES, AND OF HIS DESCENDANT, DON PEDRO CORTES, WHICH TOOK PLACE IN THIS CITY OF MEXICO, FEB. 24, 1629.

The remains of Don Hernan Cortés, (the first Marquess of the Valley of Oajaca,) which lay in the monastery of St. Francis for more than fifty years since they had been brought from Castilleja de la Cuesta, were carried in funeral procession. It also happened, that Don Pedro Cortés, Marquess of the Valley, died at the court of Mexico, Jan. 30, 1629. The Lord Archbishop of Mexico, D. Francisco Manso de Zuñiga, and his Excellency the Viceroy, Marquess of Serralbo, agreed that the two funerals should be conducted together, paying the greatest honor to the ashes of Hernando Cortés. The place of interment was the church of St. Francis in Mexico. The procession set forth from the palace of the Marquess of the Valley. In the advance were carried the banners of the various associations ; then followed the different orders of the religious fraternities, all the tribunals of Mexico, and the members of the Audience. Next came the Archbishop and the Chapter of the cathedral. Then was borne along the corpse of the Marquess Don Pedro Cortés in an open coffin, succeeded by the remains of Don Hernando Cortés, in a coffin covered with black velvet. A banner of pure white, with a crucifix, an image of the Virgin and of St. John the Evangelist, embroidered in gold, was carried on one side. On the other were the armorial bearings of the King of Spain, also worked in gold. This standard was on the right hand of the body. On the left hand was carried another banner, of black velvet, with the arms of the Marquess of the Valley embroidered upon it in gold. The standard-bearers were armed. Next came the teachers of divinity, the mourners, and a horse with sable trappings. the whole procession being conducted with the greatest order. The members of the University followed. Behind them came the Viceroy with a large escort of cavaliers; then four armed captains with their plumes, and with pikes on their shoulders. These were succeeded by four companies of soldiers with their arquebuses, and some with lances. Behind them banners were trailed upon the ground, and muffled drums were struck at intervals. The coffin enclosing

the remains of the Conqueror was borne by the Royal Judges, while the knights of the order of Santiago supported the body of the Marquess Don Pedro Cortés. The crowd was immense, and there were six stations where the coffins were exposed to view, and at each of these the responses were chanted by the members of the religious fraternities.

The bones of Cortés were secretly removed from the church of St. Francis, with the permission of his Excellency the Archbishop, on the 2nd of July, 1794, at 8 o'clock in the evening, in the carriage of the Governor, the Marques de Sierra Nevada, and were placed in a vault, made for this purpose, in the church of Jesus of Nazareth. The bones were deposited in a wooden coffin inclosed in one of lead, being the same in which they came from Castilleja de la Cuesta, near Seville. This was placed in another of crystal, with its crossbars and plates of silver ; and the remains were shrouded in a winding-sheet of cambric, embroidered with gold, with a fringe of black lace four inches deep.

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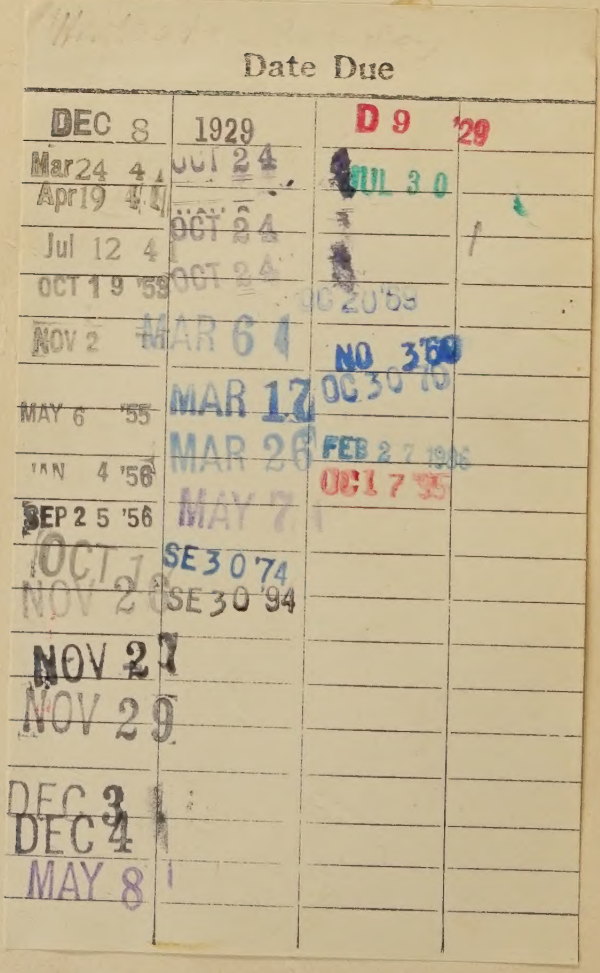
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